AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Nihil Obstat.

JOANNES ATKINSON, S.J.,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimi potest.

GULIELMUS PRÆPOSITUS JOHNSON,
Vicarius Generalis.

WESTMONASTERII,
die 28 *Aprilis*, 1906.

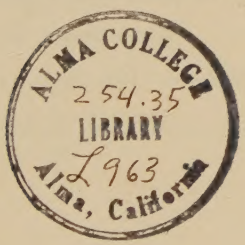
254.35
L963

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

CONSIDERATIONS AND MEDITATIONS
FOR BOYS

BY

HERBERT LUCAS, S.J.



LONDON AND EDINBURGH
SANDS AND COMPANY
ST LOUIS, MO.
B. HERDER, 17 SOUTH BROADWAY
1906

9974

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

IN THE MORNING OF LIFE

CONSIDERATIONS AND MEDITATIONS FOR BOYS

SECOND EDITION

Uniform with the present volume. 3s. 6d. net.

ALSO

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY, ETC.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

Demy 8vo. (Pp. xxxii. + 474.) 5s. net.

PREFATORY NOTE

WITH a few exceptions, noted, as they occur, at the foot of the page, the discourses contained in this volume were addressed to the boys at Stonyhurst during the school year 1904-5. An earlier collection, entitled *In the Morning of Life*, has, I have reason to believe, been found useful by others besides schoolboys, and it is hoped that the same may be the case with the present volume.

H. L.

FEAST OF ST STANISLAS KOSTKA,
November 13, 1905.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST .	1
II.	AN INVITATION FROM JESUS . . .	10
III.	CONSTRAINING JESUS	16
IV.	THE THINGS OF CÆSAR AND THE THINGS OF GOD	24
V.	THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT . . .	33
VI.	IN THE NAME OF THE LORD . . .	40
VII.	HIS HEART'S DESIRE	48
VIII.	GIFTS FOR THE KING	56
IX.	MARY IMMACULATE, OUR LADY OF VICTORIES	63
X.	THE UNKNOWN GUEST	70
XI.	NO ROOM IN THE INN	79
XII.	BETHLEHEM	88
XIII.	THE HOME OF PEACE	93
XIV.	THE STORMS OF LIFE	102
XV.	WHEAT AND TARES	112
XVI.	JOY IN SADNESS	122
XVII.	UNSELFISHNESS, OR LOSS AND GAIN . .	131

PAGE

XVIII. COUNTING THE COST 141

XIX. MEDITATION 151

XX. THE JUDGMENT TO COME . . . 160

XXI. SINCERITY IN PRAYER: ZEAL FOR GOD'S KINGDOM 169

XXII. SINCERITY IN PRAYER: GOD'S WILL OUR RULE 177

XXIII. OUR DESTITUTE CHILDREN: A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY 185

XXIV. THE KING'S HIGHWAY OF THE HOLY CROSS 194

XXV. THE ENGRAFTED WORD 212

XXVI. FREQUENT COMMUNION 218

XXVII. TREASURES IN HEAVEN 230

XXVIII. THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD . . . 238

XXIX. UNION WITH CHRIST 244

XXX. NEIGHBOURLY CHARITY 251

XXXI. AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM 256

XXXII. THE SCAPULAR A REMINDER OF DEATH . 263

XXXIII. THE EDUCATION PERIL: AN APPEAL . 277

XXXIV. THREE IDEALS OF LIFE 286

XXXV. AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS . . . 294

XXXVI. (APPENDIX.) THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF YOUTH 303

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

I.

THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST*

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom ; . . . For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." —1 Cor. ii. 1-2.

Among the portions of the New Testament which ought to be more especially familiar to us all, may be reckoned the opening chapters of the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, chapters which contain such remarkable assertions and expressions concerning the Cross of Christ, or rather, concerning Christ crucified, as the principal theme of the Christian preacher. But the words of the Apostle on this subject may have a greater force, as well as a more living interest for us, if we consider them in their relation to the circumstances of St Paul's first visit to Corinth, which may be read in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. St Paul, in the course of the second of his great missionary journeys, had crossed over from Troas

* September 25, 1904 (eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost).

into Macedonia, and having stayed some time at Philippi and Thessalonica, had come southwards to Athens.* Now Athens, as it was in those days, might be described as a sort of university town, a seat of learning to which students flocked from every quarter of the civilised world, and in which the pursuit of literature and philosophy was held in the highest esteem. At first it seemed as though the city were about to afford the Apostle a singularly favourable opening for the preaching of the Gospel. His arrival, as we learn from the Acts, did not pass unnoticed. Not merely did he find the men of Athens polished and agreeable, and glad to converse with him in private, but they invited him to give a public lecture (as we might say) in the great hall—or rather, the open theatre—of the Areopagus.† And he, for his part, was able to interest his hearers, addressing them in the language of their own philosophers and poets, and apparently creating, at first, a very favourable impression.‡ But when he came to speak of the resurrection of the body, his words provoked some ridicule; and the end of all was that these learned men of Athens gave him to understand that they had had enough of his teaching. It is true that with the politeness which befitted men of education and breeding, they said: "We will hear thee again concerning this matter"; § but the expression would appear to have been the local equivalent of a motion in the House of Commons: "That the bill be read this day six months"; or of an adjournment to the

* Acts xvii. 15.
† Acts xvii. 18, 19.
‡ Acts xvii. 20-31.
§ Acts xvii. 32.

Greek Calends. At any rate, St Paul seems to have understood them in this sense. For we read, in the brief and succinct phraseology of the Acts: "So Paul went out from among them."* Like a wise man, he took the hint and presently left the city.† The impression which he had made, though favourable, was not deep. His teaching was a novelty, and as such it amused them, but, so far as they were concerned, it went no further. This explanation of the matter is indeed very clearly indicated in the text of the Acts. For we read, at the outset of the incident. that: "They brought him to Areopagus (or Mars-hill), saying: May we know what this new doctrine is, which thou speakest of? For thou bringest certain new things to our ears."‡ And, lest the point of these words should be missed, St Luke adds, by way of parenthesis: "Now all the Athenians and strangers that were there, employed themselves in nothing else but either in telling or in hearing some new thing."§ And, inasmuch as this morbid or frivolous craving for news or novelties was far removed from that spirit of serious and humble docility with which the truths of the Gospel should be received, it is not, after all, a matter for surprise that St Paul's ministry among the Athenians was, to say the least, not conspicuously successful.

Nevertheless, though his ill-success may not be a matter for surprise to us—for it is easy to be wise after the event—none the less it was very disheartening to the Apostle at the time, just as similar

* Acts xvii. 33.
† Acts xvii. 34.
‡ Acts xvii. 19, 20.
§ Acts xvii. 21.

experiences have so often since then proved disheartening to other Christian preachers. And accordingly he came to Corinth, his next halting-place, not a little dispirited. "I was with you," he says, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."* But he was not to be daunted, and the effect of his comparative failure was to make him alter, somewhat, his plan of campaign. He would no longer rely on any of those extraneous advantages of culture and learning to which he had, perhaps, trusted too much at Athens.† He would simply preach Christ crucified. He knew very well that the death of our Lord on the Cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews, who looked for signs of power; and that the bold assertion that one who had so died was in very deed the Lord and Master of all things, would appear to the Greeks, so wise in their own conceit, the merest foolishness. Nevertheless, to die on the Cross was precisely what our Lord had done; and, after all, He knew best. The rule or principle of Christ's action should henceforth be the rule or principle of Paul's preaching. It was his, as a faithful steward of most sacred mysteries, to set forth the life and death—no less than the doctrine—of his Divine Master. If our Lord had relied on the efficacy of His death on the Cross, not merely as an atonement in relation to God, but also as an appeal to the heart of man, the Apostle could safely rely on the efficacy of the preaching or declaration of that death, and of its significance.

With the help of these explanations, we may better

* 1 Cor. ii. 3. † 1 Cor. ii. 4.

understand the bearing of St Paul's words when he wrote: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom. . . . For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That is to say, whatever other knowledge he might possess was to be as though he had it not, since it did not count at all for the purpose of the great work on which he was engaged. It was as though in one subject alone he had received a teacher's diploma; as though on this one subject alone he held a commission to enlighten mankind, whether at Corinth or elsewhere.

Now this experience of St Paul, and these words of his about the knowledge of Jesus Christ, are full of instruction and of warning for all those whose duty it is to guide others in the way of salvation. They teach us to connect all religious doctrine as closely as possible with the sacred Person of Jesus Christ, and with the culminating mystery of His passion and death; and they should serve as a warning that the neglect of this guiding principle will surely issue in failure, whether the failure be outward and visible (like that of St Paul at Athens) or not.

And if St Paul's experience and words serve for the instruction of the Christian teacher, they are, or should be, hardly less helpful to the learner, and to those in particular who—by reason of their general education and intelligence—are qualified to take an active part in the work of their own religious training. If it is the business of the priest to teach and preach Christ, it is (to use another expression of

St Paul's) no less the business of each individual among the faithful to "learn Christ"; and this is a process which, as is the case with every other branch of knowledge, each one must go through for himself; and the more so because here there is question not of theoretical but of practical and experimental knowledge; of a knowledge which is, in the highest degree, personal and individual.

Now, the knowledge of Jesus crucified is such a very wide subject that we must be content, for the present, with just one thought concerning it. And this thought has been suggested by a very simple reflection on our summer holidays, which have so recently come to a close. Suppose that every one of us were told to write an English theme this morning, not exceeding three lines in length, about the vacation, most of us would probably send up something like this: "I spent my holidays at such a place; I enjoyed myself very much; and I am very sorry that it is all over." And such an account of the matter would at least have the merit of being honest and truthful. Now we may take this imaginary—yet not wholly imaginary—theme as a kind of text, and work round from it to those words of St Paul which we were considering together just now. We have, all of us, been reminded from time to time, in the sermons or instructions that we may have heard here or elsewhere, that we cannot grab or hold fast the pleasures of this life, but that they slip through our fingers whether we will or no. And perhaps when we have heard this assertion made, we have put it aside with the half-conscious

and unexpressed reflection that it was one of those copy-book sayings which preachers are expected to repeat, but which have no particular or tangible meaning for ourselves. But our own account of the recent holidays may help us to see that the statement has a very real and practical meaning for each of us; and one that the youngest of us can understand. "We enjoyed ourselves very much";—so far, good, provided that our enjoyment was not marred by sin. And "we are *sorry that it is all over*." But after all it *is* all over; and all the regrets in the world will not bring those pleasant days back again. This we know well, and this is precisely what is meant when it is said that we cannot hold fast the pleasures of life. They pass as time passes; and as we cannot change the nature of time, we cannot render permanent those pleasures and enjoyments of which time—fleeting time—is a condition. In a few hours this day will have passed. In a few weeks Christmas will be at hand; and the Christmas holidays will pass in their turn; and so on through the years—be they many or few—of the life of each one of us. After awhile our whole life will have passed—passed beyond recall; and we shall find ourselves on the brink of eternity, which does not pass. Whatever we can carry with us over that brink, whatever we may have sent on before us, like "advance luggage," will be ours forever; but whatever we have to leave behind us there will be forever lost, no more recoverable than the phantoms of a dream. And among these things which we must needs leave behind us are the pleasures of life as such.

Now, this is not to be so understood, or misunderstood, as though we were to have no happiness here. It is precisely in order that we may enjoy true happiness here that we are exhorted, in a hundred passages of Holy Scripture, not to set our hearts on pleasure. Pleasure and happiness, though they have some points in common, are in other and more important points sharply contrasted. Pleasure passes; happiness, provided that it be of the right sort, and that we take the right means to attain it and to keep it, remains with us through all the changes, the sunshine and the clouds, the prosperity and the adversity of life. Pleasure passes with the lapse of time; happiness is, in a manner, timeless, and so links us with that eternity towards which we are all hastening.

What, then, is the secret of true and solid happiness? We may have seen rising up from the middle of a stream, a strong and sturdy post, firmly planted in the river bed, and standing unmoved as the water flows by. It is not a very exalted comparison, but it may serve our present purpose. That post, holding its position upright and unshaken in the midst of the surging waters, may be taken—for the moment—as a symbol of the Cross of Christ. This stands firm and unmoved, while pains and pleasures pass. To cling fast to it is to enjoy the best kind of happiness which is to be found in this world; and to know this is not the least important part of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Now, what is to be understood by clinging fast to the Cross of Christ? What dispositions of the mind and heart are signified when we grasp our crucifix in

our hands, as we may well do while we say a last short prayer before retiring to rest? To cling to the Cross means, in the first place, not to allow ourselves to be separated from our Lord by grievous sin; and this, of course, is the essential point. But much more than this is desirable. To cling to the Cross is to fix our hopes, not on the fleeting pleasures of this world, but upon those eternal joys which our Lord purchased for us by His crucifixion and death. To cling to the Cross is to find in it our refuge against temptation, our comfort in sorrow and in pain, our chief source of courage in danger, our chief motive for perseverance in strenuous and determined effort. To cling to the Cross is to recognise in Him who died thereon our Lord and Master, our best and dearest Friend. To cling to the Cross is to make use, to the utmost of our opportunities, of those means of drawing near to our Lord and of keeping near to Him, of those means of grace whereby the fruits of His sacred passion and death are conveyed to our souls, which He has provided for us in the Holy Sacraments of the Church. So to cling to the Cross of Christ is to have made no unimportant progress in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

II.

AN INVITATION FROM JESUS*

"And Jesus said to them: Come apart into a desert place and rest a little. For there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat."—ST MARK vi. 31.

OUR thoughts just now almost inevitably turn towards the retreat which we are about to commence within the next few days. And rightly so; for the good effects of a retreat necessarily depend, in great measure, on the dispositions with which we enter upon it. It is plainly better to begin it well than to have to use up some of the time of the retreat itself in putting oneself in the right frame of mind to profit by it. Let us, therefore, try to put ourselves in this right frame of mind beforehand. For this purpose, the first and best thing to be done is to remember that it is our Lord Himself who invites us to spend a few days in His company. He says to us, as He said to His disciples: "Come apart . . . and rest a little." We have had our bodily and mental rest during the holidays. Now we have to rest, not altogether from mental exertion,

* October 2, 1904 (nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost).

but from the cares and distractions of daily life. Many thoughts, many interests, have been "coming and going" in our hearts during the past months; and perhaps we have not had time, or we have not given ourselves time, to nourish our souls with the considerations that are most to their eternal advantage. To some extent at least this is the case with everyone who lives an active and fully occupied life, and therefore it is, as we all understand, that the practice of making an annual retreat is so highly commended. It is our Lord Himself who calls us apart. About that, if the statement be rightly understood, there can be no manner of doubt. And for several reasons it is important that we should bear it in mind.

1. In the first place, since it is our Lord Himself who invites us, we have no cause to be in any degree disconcerted or alarmed at the prospect of our retreat. It were unmanly and unworthy of us to entertain any foolish apprehensions about it, as though it were to be—except on a quite superficial view of the matter—a hard and disagreeable experience. If then we should be tempted to entertain these foolish apprehensions during the few days that are to elapse before the commencement of the retreat, we shall do well to comfort ourselves with the remembrance of our Lord's words to His disciples, when He appeared to them, walking on the waters, and they were afraid, thinking they saw a phantom. But He said to them: "It is I, fear ye not." So far from indulging in any vain fears, let us rather imitate the brave confidence of St Peter, who cried to Him: "Lord, if

it be Thou, bid me to come to Thee upon the waters." *

No, we have nothing to fear, but everything to hope, from our three days of intimate converse with our Lord. True, He may perhaps ask us to give Him something which at present we think that we would rather keep, to give up something that we now cling to. But He wishes us well; He knows best what is good for us; and, in the latter end, He will have the last word if we should be so foolish now as to oppose our will to His. He will not ask us to give up anything that we should not be better without, and He will make the sacrifice sweet and easy for us.

2. And this suggests a second reflection, arising out of our Lord's invitation. Those of us who have read our Gospels with some degree of care, will remember that the first occasion on which St Peter and some others of those who were afterwards to be apostles, made the acquaintance of Jesus, was when they were attending a sort of "mission" (as we might say) which was being given by St John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. It was the Baptist himself who first pointed out our Lord to St Andrew and another, with the words: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world." † "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turning and seeing them following Him, said to them: What seek ye? Who said to Him: Rabbi . . . where dwellest thou? He saith to them: Come and

* St Matthew xiv. 27, 28. † St John i. 29, *cf.* 36.

see. They came, and saw where He abode, and stayed with Him that day." * It was, as the Evangelist is careful to tell us, already afternoon, so that the hours of their first intercourse with Jesus were but few. Nevertheless they were fraught with great and momentous consequences. For, on the next day Andrew brought his brother Simon, and at that very first interview our Lord foretold, in words not then intelligible to him, the greatness of his future office. "And Jesus looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas," that is to say "Peter," the rock whereon the Church was to be built.† So we too are invited to "come and see," as it were, where Jesus has His dwelling. We are bidden to stay with Him for awhile; and in various ways the consequences may be momentous for us also. To some of us it may afford an occasion for the choice of a state of life; for settling, with full and serious consideration of the alternatives, and with a single-minded view to the service of God and the welfare of our souls, what our profession or occupation is to be. But for some of us the issues which depend on these days of retirement, may be of even more supreme importance. In a certain sense it may be that in the use which we make of these three days our eternal salvation will depend. How so? Because for some of us it may very well be that this is the last retreat which we shall ever have the opportunity of making. And it is no far-fetched or grotesque idea that a man who, in later life, has wandered far from God may

* St John i. 37-39. † St John i. 40-42.

be recalled to a better mind by the remembrance of some thought or word which had touched and moved him greatly at such a season as this. And even though the coming retreat should, in the case of most of us, be followed by many similar opportunities, yet we shall do well to remember that one such opportunity abused may very seriously affect others to follow.

3. And a third reason why it is useful to look forward to these days as to a time of intimate converse with our Lord, is that the recognition of this aspect of the truth will help to bring home to us what it is so important that we should all remember, viz., that for each one of us the retreat is emphatically *his own affair*. Our business is not merely to sit and listen to a preacher, and then to go and distract ourselves as best we may till it is time to come and listen to him again. A retreat made in that way would do no one much good, even though silence were perfectly kept. No, the business of the Father who gives the retreat is to help us to think for ourselves. And this work of thinking for ourselves accompanied by earnest prayer, or—in other words—meditation, is the main work of the retreat; a work which, as is obvious, no one can do for us. And as we have to think for ourselves, so also we have to make our own resolutions. Our will is our own; and no one can strengthen and stiffen it to the firmness of a resolute determination, except we ourselves, with the help of God's grace. All Jesuit retreats, as we know, are based on the book of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola; and one of the fore-

most counsels given by St Ignatius to Fathers who conduct the exercises is that they should by no means seek to exhaust every topic on which they touch, but should, on the contrary, leave each individual who is following the exercises to work it out in his own mind, and apply it to his own personal needs.

An illustration may help. When a man, by touching a button or turning a switch, causes an electric lamp, or a dozen or a hundred lamps, to flash into incandescence, it is plainly not from the switch or from the operator's finger that the light proceeds. By turning the switch he merely makes the necessary contact between the wire that serves the lamp and the source of power or illumination. And to make the contact between the individual soul and the divine source of all spiritual illumination is the purpose of a retreat, and in its degree of every sermon. Unless this contact is made and maintained, the soul will not be efficaciously enlightened.

And this truth it may be useful to apply to our ordinary meetings here on Sunday mornings. It is most desirable that what is said here on these occasions should not be regarded as mere formal discourses to be listened to with meritorious patience and then forgotten as soon as may be, but rather as friendly suggestions proposed for subsequent reflection and consideration. "Considerations and meditations," rather than "sermons," they may, it is hoped, be not unfitly called.

III.

CONSTRAINING JESUS*

"But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent."—ST LUKE xxiv. 29.

ON the first Sunday of our school year we considered together some of St Paul's words about the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thought of this knowledge and love as of that one treasure which, if a man have it, he is rich, even though he should be but a beggar like Lazarus at the gate; that one treasure which, if a man lack it, he is in the language of the Apocalypse, "poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked," even though he should outrival the wealthiest millionaire that ever lived. And on the following Sunday we reminded ourselves that the three days of our retreat were to be spent in the company of our Blessed Lord, and that our business during those days would be to grow in the knowledge and love of Him. Since then we have found that it was indeed so, much more truly and fully than we had ever anticipated.† We have learned, please God, during these three happy

* October 16, 1904 (twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost).

† The boys' retreat at Stonyhurst in October 1904 was given by Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J.

days that are so recently passed, to love our Lord and His Blessed Mother with a love far more tender than we should have thought to be within our reach.

And now a week has gone by since our retreat. We no longer have at hand the helps which we then had to stir us up to fervour and devotion; and we cannot help feeling some measure of fear lest for lack of these helps our love should again grow cold, just as a fire goes out for want of someone to tend it. It is right that we should have this sense of fear; and we may thank God that in the fear itself is to be found at least the beginning of a remedy for the evil which we dread. For our hearts are, after all, not like material coals, which depend on some external agency to keep them aglow. We have the power in ourselves, in our own will, strengthened by grace, to cleave fast to our Lord, and not to let Him go. He does not want to go away from us, He wants to stay with us; but (such is the order of His Providence) He wants us to ask Him to stay. It is a great mystery that He should wish us to ask for things which He desires to give us much more than we desire them at His hands, but about the fact there is no doubt. And so, though He does not wish to leave us, He does wish to be asked to abide with us.

Now in this matter we have for our assistance and our guidance a model and an object-lesson set before us in the Gospel. We all remember how, on the evening of the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, two of the disciples were going to Emmaus, sad and dejected, because, as it seemed to them, all their high hopes and anticipations had been ruined and

brought to nought by the crucifixion and death of our Lord. Instead of success, all His work seemed to have ended in disastrous failure. And, as they conversed thus sadly, behold Jesus Himself joined them on their journey, though they knew Him not. He made them tell Him what their trouble was, and when they had told Him, He heartened them up and encouraged them; explaining to them, from the Holy Scriptures, that the sufferings and death of the Messiah were a part of the divine design for the redemption of mankind. Still they did not know that it was He; but their hearts were so moved by His words that, on reaching their halting-place for the night, they "constrained Him," as the Gospel tells us, to stay with them. And it was not till He had gone in with them, and they were all seated at their evening meal, that their eyes were at last opened to recognise Him, and they "knew Him in the breaking of bread."

Now, the whole of this incident—which we may read, when we have time, in the twenty-fourth chapter of St Luke's Gospel—the whole of this incident is a sort of parable of the way in which our Lord wishes us to treat Him, and of the way in which He deals with us so as to induce us to treat Him as He wishes to be treated. Why did Jesus enter into conversation with those two men? and why, if He wished to converse with them, did He in a manner conceal Himself from them instead of at once letting them know who He was? There must have been some reason, some good and sufficient reason, for this. And the reason must surely have been that

He wanted to put them at their ease. He wanted them to talk to Him quite freely; to tell Him all that was in their minds; so He takes pains to "draw them out," as we might say. "And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold with one another as you walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: Art thou alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom He said: What things?" This very simple question seems to have loosened their tongues; for whereas only one of them had spoken before, now they both speak, taking one another up as we may suppose. Their words are those of men full of their subject, and eager to unburden themselves. "And He said to them: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in word and work before God and all the people." One of them, probably, said this, and then the other chimed in: "And how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him." Then the first takes up the tale again: "But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." "Yea," puts in the other, "and certain women of our company affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre; and not finding His body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive." "And some of our people," says the first, "went to the sepulchre, and found it so as

the women had said; but Him they found not." Do you see how He has drawn them out and made them talk? "Then," but not till then—not till He had made them lay open before Him the full tale of their sorrow and sadness—"Then He said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And . . . He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him."*

Now, if those two disciples had known who He was with whom they were conversing, they might very probably have been shy and afraid. His question: "What things" are these that have happened? would have seemed meaningless; and the two men would almost certainly have thought that it was of no use to tell Him what He knew already, to talk to Him, as it were, about Himself. But this is precisely what He wanted them to do; and so He allowed their eyes to be held, that they should not recognise Him, and made them reveal their hearts to Him.

And just so it is with ourselves. He wants us to tell Him about our troubles, although He knows them already. He wants us to deal with Him as with a human friend; to show that we are glad of His company, and that we value it above everything else; to tell Him that if we have done anything to displease or annoy Him, or to displease and annoy our neighbours, or our superiors, whom He wishes us to treat with respect and consideration for His sake, it was only out of thoughtlessness, and not out of any lack

* St Luke xxiv. 13-27.

of true and tender love for Him. And so at this present time, when we feel so keenly the want of the helps that we had during our retreat, we may speak to Him with the greatest confidence, and with the greatest simplicity, imploring Him not to depart from us even though we are now deprived of them. We may tell Him quite simply that we no longer have any one to pray with us and teach us how to pray, and that our own prayers are very dry and distracted; we may tell Him that we already feel the beginnings of old temptations, and that we are afraid they will grow stronger and carry us away unless He holds us by the hand and keeps us near to Him. Of course He knows all this. He understands our difficulties ever so much better than we understand them ourselves; but—as has been said—He wants us to take Him, as it were, into our confidence. And there is one case in particular in which it is especially useful to speak to Him about our troubles, and that is when we are inclined to grumble. We may do a good deal of harm by grumbling among ourselves, because grumbling either creates or increases discontent in the souls of others, and there is no need of an argument to prove that discontent is mischievous. But if we take our little grumbles to our Lord, and tell *Him* how hard we find things, how dull our life is, or how distasteful we find our studies, and so forth, then we are doing just what He wishes us to do; we are getting good out of what seems to us to be evil, and turning a cause of complaint into an occasion, not of sin, but of prayer and of love. For if we go to our Lord, and speak to Him familiarly

about these things, in the very act of telling Him we are showing our love and confidence; we are treating Him as we would treat a friend; and it is precisely in difficulties and troubles that the value of a friend is best felt and experienced. And the good results of our confidence in Jesus will not stop here. For when we have had our little grumble out in His presence, we shall hear perhaps the answer in our hearts, that for His sake we must try to make the best of things as we find them; that if we have a good deal to put up with from those who are placed over us, they perhaps have something to put up with from us; that after all there is something to be learned even from the dullest lesson; that even though we should seem to ourselves to be learning nothing, patience is a virtue very dear to Him who was "meek and lowly of heart"; and that by the practice of patience, if in no other way, we shall be learning to know and to love Him better, which is, after all, the lesson which we want to learn more than any other.

"Who?" asks St Paul—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?" And he answers his own question. "All these things we overcome," he says, "because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure," he goes on, "that neither death nor life . . . nor things present nor things to come . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Our daily troubles hardly rise to the level of

* Rom. viii. 35-39.

"tribulation," or "distress," or "famine," or "persecution." Shall we then suffer them to separate us from the love of our Lord? No; the more we feel that we are thrown on our own resources, the more keenly we feel our deprivation of those advantages which, during three or four precious days, it was our privilege to enjoy; the more closely should we cling to our Lord, the more tightly should we grasp our crucifix, protesting that in Him is our hope, that He is our one all-sufficing protection, that He is the one all-satisfying object of our love. Stay with us O Lord, stay with us; and let nothing ever separate us from Thee.

IV.

THE THINGS OF CÆSAR AND THE THINGS OF GOD*

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."—ST MATT. xxii. 21.†

IT happened in the year 1894, on the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, that the late Father John Morris, of the Society of Jesus, was preaching in the Church of the Sacred Heart at Wimbledon on the Gospel of the day. In the course of his sermon it became evident that he was suffering much, and that he could speak only with difficulty. At last, repeating his text, he said: "Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God . . . " and with these words he fell back in the pulpit, was carried to the sacristy, and died within a few moments. He had rendered unto God what belonged to God.

If we have attended at all carefully to the text of the Gospel, we can hardly have failed to notice that our Lord, before bidding His disciples to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, asks the

* October 23, 1904 (twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost).

† From the Gospel of the day.

question: "Whose image and superscription is this?" And the question is full of significance; for it implies that as the things which are to be rendered or given back to Cæsar are the things which came from Cæsar, and which bear the image and superscription of Cæsar, so also the things which are to be rendered to God are the things which come to us from His hand, and which bear His divine image and superscription. These things are, first and foremost, human souls. For it is the soul of man which has been made in the image and likeness of God; and the soul of the Christian bears His superscription also, from the moment when the waters of baptism pass upon his brow. *Et nomen ejus in frontibus eorum*, we read in the Apocalypse: "And His Name shall be on their foreheads."* The human soul is as a coinage stamped in the mint of God and issued from His divine treasury, to be "possessed in patience" during the term of this mortal life, and restored to its Maker, enhanced in value by diligent trading and the acquisition of merit, at such time as He shall choose—whether suddenly or after warning given—to demand it. Each one of us is responsible, primarily, for his own soul, and secondarily also for the souls of all those of whom he may have had any charge, or who may in one way or other have come under his influence. There is no one of us, however young he may be, or however unimportant may be his position in the world, who can dare to say to his Creator, in the words of Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?"† Yes,

* Apoc. xxii. 4. † Gen. iv. 9.

each one of us is his brother's keeper, so far as we have it in our power to help our brother, either in the exercise of some office which we may hold, or by the practice, according to our means and opportunities, of the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, or (a point by no means to be forgotten) by protecting him from harm. This is a responsibility which no external safeguards, no local regulations for the maintenance of good order, no human law, can lift from our shoulders. By the law of God Himself, written on the tables of the heart, and finding a voice in our conscience, we are responsible, each one of us, first of all for our own souls, and secondly, for the souls of our brethren. Do not forget that, in the sense which has been explained, each of us is his brother's keeper.

And now there is another point to be borne in mind. If we wish, as we all wish, to render our souls to God with full confidence in His mercy at the hour of our death, we must give our hearts to God through the days and months and years of our life. It must be admitted, indeed, that to give our hearts to God, *as God*, is not so easy as the phrase is simple. To do so is, of course, possible. For we know enough of God, even in His divine nature, to make us understand, in some measure, His measureless claims upon us. It is possible to give our hearts to God as He is in Himself; for this is what men had to do, and did, under the Old Testament. To the men of old, as to us, it was said: *Praebe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi*—"My son, give me thy heart"; * and it was under the Old

* Prov. xxiii. 26.

Dispensation that the Psalmist wrote: *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum*—"My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." * It was, then, possible for them, and under like conditions it were possible for us, to give our hearts to God, as God. But though possible, it is difficult; and we may and should be deeply thankful that the difficulty is not one that we are called upon to face. For—as Bishop Hedley reminds us—under the New Dispensation "Jesus Christ makes worship easy," at least comparatively easy, for us.

To Jesus, God made Man, it ought to be easy, relatively easy, easy with a little persevering effort, to give our hearts. Let us consider for a few moments our relations with Him under this single aspect, that He is our best, our nearest and dearest and most intimate Friend.

You love your father and mother, it is to be hoped, with a very tender affection, and there may be among your companions one or two with whom you are closely intimate, friends whom you justly regard as tried and faithful, and whom you highly esteem. And there may be moments when you think that you would like to share the most secret thoughts of father, or mother, or friend. Yet you instinctively feel—and reason confirms the instinctive feeling—that it would be no part of true filial piety, or of loyal friendship, to expect such an unreserved self-revelation. So too you may sometimes imagine that you would like to unburden yourself to them of your own inmost thoughts and emotions. Yet a little reflection

* Ps. cvii. 2.

is enough to convince you that the attempt would defeat itself. For our thoughts and emotions are ever changing, from day to day, from hour to hour, nay from moment to moment; and it would be quite impossible, even if there were nothing else to be done in this busy life, to express them all, or to express them accurately in words; to say nothing of the circumstance that many of them are unworthy to be so expressed. And so it comes about that in the best and most loyal friendship there is a tacit mutual recognition and acceptance of the necessary limitations of intimacy, limitations that can never be entirely removed till we meet in that true home whither we are all hastening.

But with our dear Lord there are no such limitations. He not only knows our thoughts and our desires before we can express them, but He understands all those vague and half-conscious movements of the soul which it would be impossible for us to put into words because, if we were to try to do so, they would elude every effort of the most minute self-introspection. And oh! how He loves us. Strong, and tender, and true, is the love of His Sacred Heart for each one of us. Each one of us is to Him as though he were the one chosen friend, singled out from among ten thousand to be the special object of His affection. Oh give Him your hearts! Keep your hearts pure, for Him; keep your hearts true, to Him; lavish upon Him all the tenderness of your love; and from Him you will draw strength and courage, the strength and the courage of true Christian manliness.

In your recitation of the Rosary you are daily reminded of the leading mysteries of His life; avail yourselves of this reminder to keep the thought of Him often before you. Keep His words in your memory, and renew your memory of them by the careful and thoughtful reading of the Gospels. You have His picture constantly before your eyes as you pass through the school galleries; cherish that picture, and let it be deeply engraven in your imagination. And see that you have His dear Name often on your lips. Jesus! It is a prayer in itself; a loving invocation to which without the addition of any other words your heart will give a meaning suitable to the mood, or the need, of the moment.

"Is any man sad," says St James, "let him pray."* Do you feel, at times, depressed, out of spirits, disappointed, disenchanted, for the moment, with life and its prospects? Cry to Him, if you will, with the Psalmist: "Save me, O Lord, for the waters are come in even unto my soul, and I am held fast in the deep mire, and there is no standing."† Or say, more simply: "Jesus, my joy and my hope, never will I lose my trust in Thee. Jesus! Jesus!" Do you feel worried and anxious, in doubt about your future, all in the dark as to what you shall decide upon? Call with all your strength on the name of the Lord. Say, if you will, with Newman:

> Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
> Lead Thou me on!
> The night is dark, and I am far from home—
> Lead Thou me on!

---

* St James v. 13. † Ps. lxviii. 2-3.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone.

Or say, more simply: "Jesus, true Light of my life, be Thou alone my guide: Jesus! Jesus!" Are you fiercely assaulted by temptation? Or do you feel yourself carried away as it were unresistingly on the tide of worldliness, and of those "youthful desires" of which St Paul speaks? Cry with all your heart: "O Jesus! Jesus! my true heart's Love, stay with me! hold me by the hand! suffer me not to be separated from Thee! Thou, O Jesus, art the true haven of all my hopes."

Of course you need not say all these things with your lips. One word, the Holy Name of Jesus alone, is enough. It is a prayer in itself. The intention of your heart, which He can read better than you can read big print, will do all the rest. If you can make no other prayer, at least do not grudge often to pronounce that Holy Name which, as St Bernard tells us, is honey on the lips, a sweet melody to the ear, a deep and abounding joy to the heart. All this you will find it to be if you persevere. Often we do not know what to pray for. We are like little peevish and wayward children who know not what they want or what is good for them; who fret when they should be thankful, cry for a trifle, laugh—as it would seem to their grave elders—without rhyme or reason. We have a vague feeling of unrest, a sense that something is amiss with us, that things in general and we ourselves in particular

are—in the modern schoolboy's expressive phrase—"rotten." Well then, recognising our own peevishness and waywardness, let us call on the Name of our Lord, trusting Him to give a meaning to our lisping cry.

And now some one may ask: "Why insist so strongly on the tender love of our Lord, on this apparently childish form of piety and devotion? Have you not often told us that holiness resides in the will and not in the feelings? Have you not told us that solid virtue is better than affective piety and is the thing to be aimed at?" Yes; all that is perfectly true. Holiness does reside primarily in the will, and without a straight will and a strong will no holiness is possible. But we have to remember that our will is, by nature and by the corruption of sin, so weak that it needs the help and support of our feelings. Virtue has its childlike side as well as its manly side, and unless we cultivate childlike devotion in our relations with our Lord and His Blessed Mother, we shall not attain to true Christian manliness in our dealings with our fellowmen. Moreover, the heart that is young and as yet unspoiled needs some present object for its love. We are away from the salutary influences of home; and if we do not assiduously cultivate a tender love for Jesus and Mary, we shall some day find ourselves indulging in tender feelings of an undesirable kind, in that soft and selfish travesty of genuine affection which sometimes works so much mischief in schools, and which sooner or later leads to worse evils, that are the very scourge of society.

Give unto God the things that are God's. Give unto God, and to Christ Jesus our Lord, and to Mary His Mother, all the fresh and tender love of your young hearts. And instead of loving your parents, your relatives, and your true friends less, you will find that your love for them will be increased as well as hallowed by your love for Him to whom you owe them all.

V.

THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT*

"And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed."—ST MATT. ix. 20, 21.†

IN one of those illuminating outbursts of confidence which are so valuable to a man whose principal occupation may be described as a kind of groping in the dark, a boy once said to me: "Father, I don't know how it is, but I feel rather sick of the whole show!" Fortunate youth!

O fortunatus nimium, sua si bona norit!

"Sick of the whole show!" Presumably it was only some kind of subsidiary side-show that he was really sick of; but taking the words as they stand, they express something like what St Paul must have felt when he wrote: *Præterit enim figura hujus mundi;* words which may be freely but expressively rendered thus: "The 'whole show' of this world is moving on." And as St Paul very wisely preferred what is permanent and enduring, he was rather

* October 30, 1904 (twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost).

† From the Gospel of the day.

"sick" of the dissolving views and shifting panorama, the pomp and pageantry, the glare and glitter of this passing life. The idea deserves to be dwelt on a little longer, and rendered more concrete by means of a description or illustration. In England, during the later Middle Ages, it was, as we know, the custom at certain seasons of the year—usually during the octave of Corpus Christi—to enact what were known as "mystery plays." The theatre was, in many instances at least, a contrivance on wheels, and was dragged from one part of the town to another, the performance being repeated in each place. It appears to have been a sort of three-decker arrangement, the lowest compartment affording a glimpse of hell, the principal stage representing the surface of this habitable earth, while some kind of rude presentment of heaven was shown aloft. And the performance itself was a kind of epitome of human history from the Creation to the Redemption. Now we can imagine, at the conclusion of one of these "mysteries," when the huge wain was about to start for its next halting-place, the town-crier or village beadle calling out in the words of some accustomed formula: "The show is moving on: stand clear!" Even so does St Paul cry out to us in that great voice of his which echoes across the ages: *Præterit figura hujus mundi*—"The show of this world is moving on: stand clear!" Thrice happy those in whose hearts, and not in their ears alone, this voice finds an echo, and to whom the grace is given to "stand clear" in very deed, while the world's show passes them by. Better to possess in its fullest

measure the franchise of an abiding city, and a choice freehold therein, than to enjoy the excitement of a temporary footing on the boards of a booth in a fair.

Now it is highly probable that, to some of us, what has been said will seem to have no meaning at all, or at any rate no bearing on our own individual daily lives. Let us come down then from the high philosophy of St Paul to the simplicity of the Gospel narrative which is read on this present Sunday. There, too, we have the account of a poor woman who was—in her own way—"sick of the whole show." For twelve years she had been the victim of a distressing malady, an issue of blood that was continually draining away her vital forces and sapping all her strength; besides which she had, in the expressive language of the Evangelists, spent all her substance on physicians and was no better for it, "but rather worse," as St Mark tells us.* But now at last hope dawned upon her, for Jesus was close at hand; and if she could but get near enough to Him to touch the hem of His mantle, she would surely be healed. In her trusting faith and her instinctive humility, she would not ask for so much as a word from Him; a mere touch, such as no one—not even the Master Himself, as she thought—should perceive, would be enough. And so, with a woman's quiet perseverance, she presses her way through the thronging crowd; and she has her desire, and more than her desire. She is healed of her evil, and she

* St Mark v. 26. It is characteristic of St Luke, the physician, that he omits this phrase.

hears from the Master's lips His commendation of her faith.

And now, can we see in that poor woman a picture of ourselves? Have we, perchance, or some of us, been suffering for years from a spiritual malady of which her issue of blood may serve as a symbol? Have our energies and vital forces been drained, spilt, shed abroad as it were, and in part exhausted, to no purpose? Have we perhaps allowed ourselves, to some extent at least, and during some portion of our life at school, to fritter away our time, to waste our opportunities, to squander our gifts in frivolous trifling, or — worse still — to lavish on unworthy objects, and in that mischievous, selfish, and unmanly softness against which we have been so often and so earnestly warned, our heart's capacity for genuine love.

Our souls can never be, in this present life, absolutely and entirely and perfectly at rest. We are full of more or less vague desires and longings for something that will satisfy us; and we are all more or less strongly inclined to seek our satisfaction either in unlawful pleasures, or in undesirable self-indulgence, or in thoughtless frivolity, or in trifles of one kind or another—those "things of a child" of which St Paul speaks. Indeed the inclination is so strong in us all that if it were not kept in check it would become a chronic disease of the soul, sapping and undermining the character, weakening and unmanning us.

Is there then no remedy for this disease if we should have become affected by it? Oh yes, there is

a remedy, and it is near at hand. The great Physician of our souls stands ready to heal us. All that is needed is that we should be aware of our need, and that we should have a genuine and strong desire, like that of the woman in the Gospel, to come at Him, and to overcome all obstacles for this purpose. We may have to press our way through the crowd; through a crowd of distracting thoughts, or of temptations, or of dangerous occasions of sin. How often, perhaps, have we allowed these or other obstacles to hinder our approach to Him in the Sacrament of His love? Stirred by the example that is set before us in to-day's Gospel, let us resolve that it shall never be so with us again. To learn to overcome lesser obstacles now is the best preparation we can make for overcoming greater hindrances in later life.

"If I do but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be healed." There is just one particular application of this text, a very homely application, which may be useful in conclusion. All our public spiritual duties have a certain fringe or margin, an interval shorter or longer before public prayers begin. And a rather good test of the true earnestness of our devotion may be found in the use which we make of these marginal intervals. Do we spend these intervals, as far as may be, in lingering and loitering outside the chapel door? Or do we, on the contrary, enter promptly, like men who have serious business in hand and cannot afford to fritter away their time? And when we have entered the chapel, what is our procedure? We kneel down, of

course, in our places and make the sign of the Cross; but—after that—do we at once set to work to pray? Or do we allow ourselves to pass the time while we are waiting for the commencement of the service or public prayers in a state of mental vacuity? If we are really desirous to be with our Lord, if we are as eager as that poor woman in the Gospel to touch the hem of His garment, we shall take care to make the best use of these brief opportunities. The prayers which we make, then, out of our own hearts, may be more valuable in His estimation than those set forms of devotion, prescribed for all in common, which are always apt to degenerate into routine. And there will, moreover, be far less danger of our public prayers degenerating into routine if we preface them by some prayers of our own, hot from the fervour of our own hearts.

When, then, you come into the chapel, eager to touch the hem of the Master's garment, imagine yourselves lifting the skirt of His robe to your lips and tell Him in all sincerity that you wish to find in Him your stay and your solace, your comfort and your hope, the source of your strength, your heart's joy, and the one supreme object of your love; and that your one desire is to do in all things what will be most pleasing to Him. And if your conduct during the day is not always quite in accordance with these fervent outpourings, the fact of this inconsistency will gradually dawn upon you and make you ashamed; and His love, ever deepening in your hearts and taking fuller possession of them, will sooner or later prove a remedy for all your spiritual ailments,

for all those weaknesses, great or small, which in each one of you, in greater or less degree, mar the perfect manliness of the Christian character. "If I do but touch the hem of His garment I shall be healed."

VI.

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD*

"All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."—COL. iii. 17.†

WHEN a student or former student of this college distinguishes himself in any department of life, or in any quarter of the globe, the pages of our school Magazine bear witness to the satisfaction which we all feel, and convey to him our hearty congratulations on his success. But now the Festival of All Saints, which we celebrated together the other day, may have served to remind us that there is something better and higher than outward and visible success, and that, of all the possible kinds of distinction that may be within our reach, the one which—immeasurably beyond all others—our Lord desires for us, and which we ought to desire for ourselves, is the distinction of Christian holiness. I say the "distinction" of holiness, because real holiness of life differs from ordinary virtue somewhat in the same way as taking high honours in a public examination differs from—

* November 6, 1904 (twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost).
† From the Epistle of the day.

and is better than—securing a mere pass. And assuredly our Divine Master would have good reason to be disappointed if, with the many advantages which we enjoy, the best of us were to be no better than pass-men in the affair of His holy service. He expects some of us at least to try for honours in this the most important branch of our education; that is to say, according to the measure of our several gifts, He expects at least some of us deliberately to aim at real holiness of life. Or rather, He asks all of us to aim at this, and expects some of us to attain to it. To aim at the best we know is the only safe rule for each one of us. It is only by trying for a distinction that we can (humanly speaking) make sure of our pass.

How, then, does holiness differ from ordinary virtue? The distinction may, perhaps, be stated somewhat in this fashion. The ordinarily virtuous man sets before himself as his ideal the avoidance of what is evil. He turns his mind promptly away from bad thoughts when they assail him; he keeps a guard over his tongue; and of course he is careful to abstain from any sinful action. And he understands very well that, in order to keep himself in the grace of God, he must be faithful to his prayers and regular in his reception of the sacraments, and that he must by all means shun every proximate occasion of sin. He has taken to heart our Lord's words: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." That man certainly deserves a pass certificate. His papers show, no doubt, a few slips and minor errors, but no serious mistakes; or, if he had originally made

some grave blunders, they have been corrected before the papers were sent in. He has got his pass. But he is not, on this account, a brilliant honours candidate. It would be a misuse of words to speak of a man as "holy," simply because he has observed the ten commandments. "All these have I kept from my youth," said the young man in the Gospel, asking at the same time whether there was anything more to be done. And our Lord gave him very clearly to understand that in his case there was very much more to be done if he wished to be "perfect," or—as we might say—"holy." A man who deserves to be called holy is one who is by no means content with avoiding evil. His constant effort is to do good, as much of it, and as well, as he possibly can, in prayer, in self-denial, in almsgiving, and good works of all kinds, according to his opportunities. He loves our Lord with all his heart, not in words only, or in tender feelings, but in very deed; and he is never satisfied with what he can do for the Master who has done so much for him.

When the case of any one is proposed for canonisation or beatification, the most important and fundamental question that is asked about him is this: whether he has practised the Christian virtues "in an heroic degree." No holiness without heroism; that is the principle, that is the rule which admits of no exceptions. A man's heroism may indeed be so hidden as to be known to very few, or even to no one at all except God and our Lady, and the angels and saints. Or again, what looks like heroism may be vitiated by some hidden flaw, for instance, of vain-

glory; though in this case the defect is pretty sure to betray itself sooner or later. However, we are not concerned just now with man's judgment about the holiness of his fellowmen, but with holiness in itself as judged by God. And here the rule holds good: no holiness without heroism; though, of course, there are degrees of holiness just as there are degrees of heroism. A man may secure a very creditable place in the honours list without being actually at the head of it. But, for the attainment of holiness, it is essential that there should be at least some degree of heroism. It may be, according to circumstances, the heroism of endurance (for great crosses usually fall to the lot of those who are most dear to God), or heroism in resistance to evil, or the heroism of an austere life of penance and self-denial, or at the very least, the heroism of sustained and strenuous effort. In all the annals of the Church we never read of an indolent saint, of a slack saint, of a limp and languid saint, or of a frivolous saint. There are, in every class of society, plenty of harmless, comfortable Christians, "very good fellows" as we should say, who will, please God, save their souls, but whose virtues are manifestly of the "jog-along-gently" order. "Very good fellows" in their way, but most unmistakably mediocrities. Now it certainly is not this kind of middling virtue which our Lord expects from those who have enjoyed such blessings and opportunities as are ours, or with which we have reason to be satisfied ourselves.

And now there is another point to be considered. The question as between holiness and ordinary

virtue is not determined simply and solely by one's state of life. A man does not become holy by the simple process of putting on a cassock and a Roman collar, or the habit of a religious order. Ordination to the priesthood does not make a man holy, nor the taking of religious vows, nor even the keeping of them. All these things are, of course, helps to holiness. But no one would pretend that all the priests and religious who have ever lived, or even that all of them who have substantially done their duty, were holy men; while, on the other hand, no one doubts that there have been very holy laymen in all professions, from St Louis the King down to St Crispin the shoemaker, and St Benedict Labre the beggar. And the Church at the present day needs holy laymen as well as holy priests. Accordingly it by no means follows that, because a man hopes to be a priest, therefore he may take it for granted that somehow, and without any special effort of his own, he will become a holy priest; or that, because he is going to remain a layman, therefore he need not aim at holiness of life. It was to a very mixed audience that our Lord said: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

But this we shall all of us do well to remember; that if we wish to be holy as our Lord wishes us to be holy, we cannot begin too soon. It happened once to a singularly punctual friend of mine (as it might happen to any one of us) to miss a train. "Ah! Sir," said a sympathetic onlooker, "you didn't run fast enough." "Yes," was the reply, "I ran fast enough, but I did not start soon enough." To start

soon enough may be to win half the battle. If we do not begin while we are young, and while our faculties are still fresh and pliable, the chances are that we shall never attain to true holiness as distinguished from rather ordinary virtue. If we were to content ourselves with a more or less slack and indolent kind of goodness now, it is extremely probable that our virtue through life would be of the slack and indolent order; and this, assuredly, is "not good enough" for us. From us at least, considering our gifts and opportunities, our Lord asks and expects more than this.

Let us suppose then that, under the promptings of God's grace, a certain percentage of us have seriously determined to aim at real holiness of life, whether as laymen or as priests. How are we to begin? It is plain that we cannot expect to be heroes all at once, any more than one who is beginning to learn music can expect to play one of Beethoven's sonatas the day after to-morrow. In learning music we have to begin with scales and easy exercises; and so too in the spiritual life we must begin with what is more or less elementary, but with a determination to keep pushing on and not to relax our efforts.

Now in the Epistle of to-day's Gospel St Paul gives us an excellent counsel, which in this matter may very appropriately take the place of the scales and first exercises in music. "All, whatsoever you do, in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "All things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." The Holy Name of Jesus,

says St Bernard, is as honey on the lips, a sweet melody in the air, a deep joy in the heart—*Mel in ore, in aure melos, in corde jubilus.* All this, sooner or later, we shall find it to be, if only we will persevere in the frequent and fervent invocation of that most sacred Name, coupling with it the name of our Queen and our Mother, Mary Immaculate. But a point to which we may usefully attend just now is this. The Holy Name, if we use it frequently and devoutly, will by degrees become to us something more than a source of comfort and consolation. It will afford us many a check and many a stimulus, of the sort which we greatly need as we make our first steps towards Christian holiness. We shall feel that there are many things, even things which are not positively sinful, but only foolish and inordinate, which we cannot do "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and which we shall feel ourselves warned or checked from doing if we have His Name on our lips. We cannot for instance ask Him to help us to play the fool in the class-room, or to make a noise in the study-place, to be impertinent to a priest, or to give annoyance to a lay-master. These are not the sort of things which St Paul, if he were here, would counsel us to do "in the name of the Lord." And then, on the other hand, this same Holy Name will be to us a most salutary stimulus or spur. It will spur us to endurance by the thought of what He endured for us. It will spur us to resist temptation promptly and manfully, for it will remind us of His divine presence; and we easily abstain from evil-doing when one whom we love and revere and hold in awe

is near at hand. It will spur us at least to small acts of self-denial, which as time goes on will grow to something greater and more nearly approaching the heroic. It will spur us to more continuous and persevering efforts to perform all our actions and to regulate our words in such a manner as may best please Him. Endurance, resistance to temptation, voluntary self-denial, and a strenuous and persevering effort, these are the four strands or threads out of which the texture of holiness may be said to be woven.

Here then we may make a very practical beginning. Here is a very simple and elementary exercise in the art of holiness, viz., to hallow all our actions and occupations of whatsoever kind with the fervent invocation of the most sweet Name of Jesus. Lord Jesus I ask Thy blessing on what I am going to do. Lord Jesus I ask Thy forgiveness for all the faults I have committed during the work or the game, the study or the recreation, which I have just finished. Lord Jesus I thank Thee for all Thy goodness to me; and I wish to make some little return, not in prayer only, but in all the actions and employments of the day. "All whatsoever you do, whether in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

VII.

HIS HEART'S DESIRE*

"His heart's desire Thou hast given him, and the petition of his lips Thou hast not withholden from him."—Ps. xx. 3.

A LAD of eighteen when he died, a saint soon to be declared worthy of being venerated at God's altar; a boy of fifteen or sixteen in the Imperial College at Vienna, and already distinguished by most remarkable holiness—such was Stanislas Kostka, whose memory is celebrated in the Calendar of the Society of Jesus on this thirteenth day of November. Nor, as we all know, does he stand alone; for he is but one of three youths who, within half a century of one another, succeeded in attaining to conspicuous sanctity even in their earliest years, and who afforded, moreover, only the most brilliant instances of a precocious virtue which in those days was not altogether uncommon. And why, we may well ask ourselves, should not an English school in the twentieth century produce boys distinguished for holiness, as well as an Austrian or Belgian or Roman college in the sixteenth and seventeeth? At any rate

* Sunday, November 13, 1904 (Feast of St Stanislas Kostka).

we shall do well to profit to the utmost by the example of Stanislas, the typical schoolboy saint, and to encourage ourselves thereby to strive for the very best that is within the reach of each one of us individually, instead of measuring ourselves by what we see or think we see in our companions, and by the current conventions and fashions of school life, and thus allowing ourselves — so far as spiritual matters are concerned—to settle down to a sort of contented and self-complacent mediocrity.

A characteristic feature of the sanctity of Stanislas Kostka, and one which specially merits our attention, was the wonderful force of his will, and the intense earnestness of his desire for union with our Lord. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, even so my soul panteth after Thee, my God. My soul thirsteth after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before His face?" * Thus wrote the Psalmist, centuries before the Christian era. In Stanislas this thirst for the presence of God took the form, in the first place, of an ardent and insatiable longing to receive our Lord as often as possible in Holy Communion. Through the tedious days and weary nights of his sickness at Vienna, when his tutor and his brother refused to send for a priest, he prayed and prayed, and poured out his soul to God that he might have his heart's desire; and as we read in his life, the Holy Communion was miraculously brought to him on what seemed so likely to be his deathbed; and yet again, as we are told, he miraculously received the same heavenly food on his

* Ps. xli. 2, 3.

journey to Rome. And, whatever may be the interpretation to be put upon these occurrences—whether they are rightly to be described as miracles or as visions—about the intense earnestness of his desire there can be no kind of mistake. And then, secondly, the boy had set his heart on following our Lord in the state of life to which he believed himself to be called. And if it were necessary to walk fifteen hundred miles to get what he wanted, fifteen hundred miles he would walk. And he did it, as we all know. It was purely and simply the attraction of Jesus which drew him, like a magnet, over all those long and weary miles. To be with Jesus was the one desire of his heart; and in the end he had his desire. *Desiderium animæ ejus tribuisti ei*—"His heart's desire Thou hast given him; and the will of his lips Thou hast not withholden from him."

Now we all of us need a great deal more than we have of that straightness and strength of will which in so high a degree distinguished Stanislas. To will one thing above all others, to will it strongly, and, as far as is possible to human frailty, to will it all the time, instead of childishly willing first one thing and then another, one thing here in the chapel, and another outside,—that is what we need, if we are to attain to anything remotely approaching holiness of life; nay, we need some measure of it if we are to establish ourselves in that Christian manliness which is the least that can reasonably be expected of us.

And this strength of will and rectitude of purpose we must acquire as Stanislas acquired it, by putting

ourselves within the scope and reach of that attraction which through all his life drew him so powerfully on. What we call the weight of a great stone which falls with ever-increasing velocity to the earth, is not anything in the stone itself, but the attraction of the earth which draws it, just as the earth itself is kept in its orbit by the still more powerful attraction of the sun. How, then, are we to put ourselves within the sphere of the same influence which attracted him, the influence of Jesus? To this question some of us may find the answer in our crucifix. We, each of us, I suppose, have our own crucifix hanging by our bedside or round our neck, and it is worth every effort that we can make to bring home to ourselves all that this sacred representation means for us. We have to learn—we have to teach ourselves—to think of the passion and death of our Lord, not simply as something that happened a long time ago, but as a living and ever present reality. For He who suffered as Man, is truly God, to whom all time is present; and His sufferings express the very extremity of His enduring and unchanging love for us, and are a perpetual invitation to us to love Him with a love not faint and feeble and intermittent, but strong and constant and—as far as may be—ceaseless. Do not grudge, while you are yet young, to cultivate this love in your hearts; and please God it will grow and grow, and carry many of you forward in the way of holiness to an extent that at present you little dream of.

Set Him, then, before your eyes, hold His cross in your hands, press with your lips the feet of that sacred

image:—do these things when you have shut out all the world besides at your retiring to rest. Say to yourselves, for it is true: "*This* is the great reality; all the rest of the show is but canvas and cardboard, tinsel and paste, except so far as it relates to Him who died on the cross to show me, and to open for me, the true way to the true life, to Him who is my true love." Human love is, as you know, and as all literature testifies, the most precious thing in this temporal life of ours. The passion of avarice, the desire for wealth, sways great multitudes of men; stronger still is ambition, the craving for honour, and place, and power; but far stronger than these, in such souls as are capable of it, is the passion of love. Yet no merely human love can compare with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it burns with a fierce consuming flame in the hearts of His saints, and as it will burn in the hearts of many of you, if you will but be faithful and constant in your efforts to kindle this sacred fire. And all the love of all the saints for Jesus, what is it but a faint and flickering flame by comparison with the furnace seven times heated of His love for each one of us, cold and fickle, and thoughtless and childish, and even sinful, as we may be?

We know, as it were with the surface of our minds, that this is so; and it is in great measure our own selfishness and our thoughtlessness that impede us from apprehending the truth with a deep inward conviction. It is because our appetite is cloyed with the innutritious husks of passing pleasures that we do not hunger for Him with the imperious

hunger of love. This hunger of the heart, this hunger of love, it is ours to cultivate, and if we will take pains to cultivate it, we shall begin to understand by our own experience the meaning of those words of the Psalmist: "His heart's desire Thou hast given him," and the rest. *Esurientes implevit bonis*, it is "the hungry," that is to say, those who are deeply conscious of their soul's need, whom He "filleth with good things"; while "the rich," that is to say, those who are self-satisfied and deem themselves to "want for nothing," He "sendeth empty away." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill." But, if we do not hunger and thirst, we shall not be filled. Of this hunger of the soul we shall gradually become more and more conscious, the more tenderly we cherish the memory of Christ crucified. Sooner or later we shall come to see that the only thing worth asking for with our whole heart, whether for ourselves or for others, is just that which He is most desirous of giving us; viz., that we and all those for whom we pray may be more closely united to Him.

And if we do but persevere in this petition for a closer union with our Lord, we shall begin sooner or later to understand a little better what it is that we are asking for. Whether we know it or not, we are asking for a share in His cross; for we cannot keep Him company but by treading the way that He trod. And surely if our love is genuine and strong we shall begin to say to ourselves: "Shall my love be scourged, scourged for my sins, and shall

I recline at ease? Shall my love be crowned with thorns, mocked and reviled, for my sins, and shall I bask in the sunshine of human flattery? Shall my love bear on His torn and wounded shoulders the heavy weight of the cross my sins, symbolised by that rough word, and shall I go free? Shall my love be racked with a cruel thirst for my sins, and shall I indulge my palate at every turn? Shall my love be nailed to a cross, and shall I seek in all things my own comfort and amusement?" They are heart-searchings such as these that inspired the saints with their desire for suffering and their love of penance, that made an innocent boy like Stanislas gird himself with his cincture of sharp points, and chastise his body as though he had been a great sinner. And these same questionings, if we face them courageously and do not elude them, will kindle in our hearts also at least some first sparks of the love of the cross, some beginning of the desire to share in the sufferings of our Lord; and with experience—the inner experience of the soul—we shall learn, as time goes on, that the highest and truest happiness that is to be had here on earth lies not in ease and comfort, but in the joyful endurance of whatever crosses our dearest Lord may be pleased to send us, or to invite us to take up for His sake.

It is thus that our love of Jesus crucified will become not only tender but strong, not only childlike in its confidence but manly in its resolves; and it is when we have schooled ourselves to desire above all things to follow Him as closely as He will allow

us to do so, that we shall learn by our own experience the truth of those words of the Psalmist: "His heart's desire Thou hast given Him, and the will of his lips Thou hast not withholden from him."

VIII.

GIFTS FOR THE KING*

"Son . . . do good to thyself, and offer to God worthy offerings."—ECCLES. xiv. 11.

TO-DAY, as you know, we commence the holy season of Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas; and the Church through her liturgy exhorts us so to prepare for that great festival, as though now for the first time our Lord were about to make His appearance in His own world in human form. For knowing well that the events and incidents of our Lord's life are but the human expression of divine attributes which are unchanging and unchangeable, knowing well that to God all time is "now," all the centuries of history are "to-day," and knowing too that all progress in the spiritual life is a progress in the knowledge and love of our Lord, she wisely invites us year by year to accompany Him step by step as it were through the whole course of that earthly pilgrimage which He undertook for our sakes.

During these coming weeks, then, we are invited to make, each one of us, our personal and individual preparation to welcome our Lord at His birth. To

* November 27, 1904 (first Sunday of Advent).

each the invitation will come with a different meaning. To some it will seem to be little more than a conventional form of words; to others it will appeal more seriously, for they will understand that it is an invitation addressed to them by the Church to make in very truth a fresh start in the life-long process of learning to know our Lord better, and to love Him with greater tenderness and with a more determined courage. And it is to those who are minded to take the invitation seriously that these words are addressed. What, then, should be the nature of our preparation? Surely such as we have reason to judge would please Him best. We want to welcome Him with gifts, as becomes loyal and loving subjects. Now, when we are going to make a present to some one whom we love very much indeed, and to whom we wish to testify our love, we take some pains to think what sort of gift will be most welcome to the recipient. And in the case of our Lord it is plain that He does not expect the same from all. From the Magi He accepted gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, the rich gifts of wealthy men, the products of their country, the staple of their revenue. From the shepherds He would take—or His Mother would take on His behalf—and with no less gratitude, a lamb from the flock, or a bundle of straw for the manger, or of wood for firing, to temper the raw cold of a winter's night, or any of the simple articles of food which such men use in Palestine. And moreover, if a man advances in virtue, as he ought, he may and should, as the years pass by, have better and better offerings to bring. In planning our gifts, then,

we have to take account of our personal and present circumstances. From one He asks the giving up, at last, of some evil habit, some dangerous or undesirable companionship, which ought to have been renounced long ago. Another may feel drawn to make the matter of his offering a more diligent attention to prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading, or to the remembrance of the presence of God during the day. One may perhaps reflect that heretofore his Christmas holidays have been spent in rather a selfish fashion, without much thought for the poor, and may be led to form a determination that this time he will find some part, at least, of his Christmas happiness in the effort to make others happy for our Lord's sake. Many of us, perhaps most of us, can make no more acceptable offering than a renewal of those good resolutions which we made during our late retreat. Have we kept them? If so, then we will thank our Lord that we have something definite and tangible to lay at His feet. Have we already lapsed from them, or perhaps almost forgotten them? Then we will lament that we have but a dish of broken meats to set before our King, and we will ask Him to help us to be more faithful for the time to come.

But some of us, it may be hoped, will by no means be content with gifts so fragmentary and particular as these. Some of us, even while yet young, will have sufficient mental insight and penetration to understand, and sufficient nobility of heart to draw a far-reaching conclusion from the knowledge, that as our Lord came to give Himself to us and for us, wholly and without stint, so the

worthiest offering which a man can make to Jesus and for Jesus is that of himself, with all his powers of mind and body, of heart and soul. There will be some among us who, even at your early age, will at least begin to feel that for them the indulgence of every moment's whim and the following of the fancy of each hour can bring no stable, no lasting satisfaction; that for them life must lack its best savour, its crown of happiness, unless it be filled with a great and supreme love; that sort of love which gives unity and consistency to a man's life, and imparts to his will an indomitable strength that no obstacle can daunt; that sort of love which purges out all unworthy affections, and elevates, purifies, refines, and hallows those which are good because they are in accordance with God's holy will; a love which makes self-denial, the denial of our baser self, like the setting of the foot upon a noxious reptile; a love which cannot rest till it be sated with sacrifice, with endurance either of toil or of pain for the sake of the beloved; that sort of love which no merely human object can either justify or satisfy; the supreme and all-sufficing love of God made Man, Christ Jesus our Lord. It is a love which seeks the closest union with Jesus, not merely in the way of tender and affectionate feeling, but—as we become strong enough in some degree to bear them and to share them—union with Him in His poverty and His privations, in His labours and His pains; the closest union in these respects to which, in His great goodness and mercy, He may be pleased to admit us. In the case of one who is fired with such a love, or who feels its first

flames springing in his heart, his offering will take the form of a humble petition: "My Lord and my King, I cast myself at Thy feet; I beg as a great favour to be allowed to enrol myself among Thy chosen followers. Thou hast come to do a great work on my behalf and on behalf of all mankind, a work by comparison with which all the business of the world is the veriest child's-play; it is my desire, if Thou wilt deign to accept my offering, to help Thee in Thy work, to spend myself and be spent in Thy service; and as Thou hast traced out with weary and bleeding footsteps the way of the Cross as the highest and noblest which man can tread, so it is my wish, as far as my strength may allow, to follow Thee along that rough and rugged path, that through life I may be ever close to Thee, even until death."

It is, indeed, a steep and rugged path of which the first steps have here been briefly and weightily sketched out. But there is good breathing on the heights, nay, even on the foothills of the mountain of Christian holiness, provided only a man will resolutely keep his face towards the summit whereon the Cross is planted; air for a *man* to breathe, very different from the dull and heavy atmosphere of habitual self-indulgence, the close and stuffy air of that untidy nursery, full of broken toys, of puppets that have half lost their power to please, in which so many of us linger long after the days of our childhood are past; the nursery of those overgrown children, the votaries of the world and its pleasures.

Does it seem to you that these are wild words, like the words of a voice heard afar off in a dream? They are, but slightly paraphrased, the words which a great saint and an eminently practical man, St Ignatius of Loyola, invites the exercitant to use at the conclusion of his great meditation, "On the Kingdom of Christ." And it is well to have our minds from time to time lifted to higher ideals, even though it were but as in a dream.

But, what is much more to the purpose, for some of you, even though they should be but few, these things will be no dream, but will have a very real and tangible meaning, which, as you grow in years and in grace, you will realise more and more fully in your own experience. Are there ten among us who have, or who are capable of acquiring, the heroic spirit and the dauntless determination of those men, our martyrs, who saved the faith for England

In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword,

and who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus? Are there ten, or five, or two, or one? God alone can tell, but anyone who can read the signs of the times must know that men who are ready to make any and every sacrifice for the love of Jesus are needed in the Church to-day; and whence should they come if not from a school like this? Whether there be any of you who understand what has been said about a passionate love of our Lord, of its nature and of its consequences, God alone knows. But we may all remember our Lord's own words when He set before a very mixed audience

the highest standard of perfection: *Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat! Qui potest capere, capiat!*—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" "Let him take it who can!"*

As for the rest of us, who feel that these higher aims are not for us, we can do no better than take to ourselves those words of the wise man: "Do good to thyself, and offer to God worthy offerings." The more we can bring ourselves to give to God and to do for God, the better it will be for ourselves.

* St Matt. xiii. 9; xix. 12.

IX.

MARY IMMACULATE, OUR LADY OF VICTORIES*

"And I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head." —GEN. iii. 14.†

FROM the earliest ages of the history of the Church, our Blessed Lady has been called, and with good reason, the second Eve, even as her Divine Son is spoken of by St Paul, in more than one passage of his Epistles, as the second Adam. The correspondence is one partly of comparison and partly of contrast. As Adam was the head and origin of the physical or natural life of the whole race of mankind, so Christ our Lord was and is, for all mankind, the source of the spiritual and supernatural life of grace.

* Sunday, December 4, 1904 (second Sunday in Advent). It will be remembered that the jubilee of the Definition of the Immaculate Conception occurred on December 8, 1904.

† "She shall crush thy head." The Vulgate reading is here followed. Notwithstanding the testimony of the Hebrew, Greek, and early Latin MSS. in favour of the masculine pronoun, the double antithesis in the preceding clauses would seem to postulate the feminine. That the Hebrew text should be corrupt, and that the early versions should have followed suit, is by no means an impossible or unheard-of occurrence in the domain of textual history.

So far the parallel. And on the other hand, by way of contrast, as Adam was the cause of our spiritual ruin, so Christ our Lord was the cause of our restoration. The work of our ruin was accomplished, so far as he was concerned, when Adam, in disobedience to God's command, tasted of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. And the work of our redemption was accomplished—again so far as He was concerned—when Christ, the second Adam, made obedient even unto death, hung as a most precious fruit on that other tree of true knowledge, and of true life, the Cross on Calvary. And as Eve had her part in our fall, our Blessed Lady had her part in our restoration; so that she is entitled, in a certain sense, to be called our Co-Redemptrix. Not that, as a creature, she could, of her own right, have done anything towards the work of our redemption; but, as we all know, it pleased God to make the actual carrying out of that work dependent on her choice. As Eve contributed to our ruin by that evil counsel which she was beguiled into giving by the tempter, so Mary contributed to our restoration by that humble consent which she gave at the invitation of the Angel. And as Eve stood by the forbidden tree, bearing her part by evil counsel in the work of our ruin, so Mary stood by the tree of the Cross, bearing her part in the work of our redemption, through the renewal of her consent to that Motherhood which had been offered her by the Angel; a consent of which she now for the first time perceived the full import in so far as it entailed the piercing and rending of her own heart with unutterable sorrow. "I will put enmities

between thee and the woman," God had said to the tempter; "and she shall crush thy head." The age-long enmity was irrevocably set between the woman and the enemy of mankind when she was exempted from the stain of original sin. But the Immaculate Conception was the presage and the commencement of her victory, not its consummation. If we may venture to say so, it would have availed little that Mary should have been conceived Immaculate, had she not lived all unspotted and unstained; nor can her triumph over the powers of darkness be said to have been fully achieved till she stood, undaunted even by that awful tragedy, beneath the Cross of her Son, where she received us as her children by adoption. Her Immaculate Conception, then, was not a mystery apart, it had its appointed place at the outset of a whole scheme or economy of conflict and of conquest; a conflict and a conquest in which we must share if we are to share her triumph.

While, then, we congratulate our Lady, during this week of jubilee, on her great and unique privilege of having been in her Conception as throughout her life all spotless and stainless, we shall do well to consider how far our conduct squares with our congratulations. For we must clearly understand and sedulously bear in mind that, unless we are making a very earnest effort to overcome our evil tendencies, there is something wanting to the thoroughness of our professions of devotion to Mary, and of our love for her. If we saw someone engaged in a severe struggle, and if instead of helping him we were to content ourselves with

congratulating him when by his own efforts he had come through unscathed, our congratulations would at best be somewhat cheaply rated. And this is just our case in relation to our Blessed Lady if we congratulate her on her victory—a victory won on our behalf—without taking any serious part in the conflict ourselves. Not to enter into details, which would be unsuitable on a joyful occasion like the present, it may be sufficient to suggest a little self-examination as to how we stand with regard, in the first place, to a due control of our tongue and temper, and with regard, in the second place, to anything that could endanger the holy virtue of purity. In these two points we may find something to test the thorough sincerity of our professed devotion to our Lady.

Moreover, as we look on Mary Immaculate in her character as the second Eve, let us remember those words in which her great client St Bernard reminds us that as Eve—to our undoing—gave to Adam the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, so Mary—for our restoration—offers to us that precious fruit from the tree of the Cross which is none other but the body of her Son. In another character, as Mother of the Infant Jesus, her statue yonder represents her as holding out her Divine Son towards us. Do you not think that, if her voice could be heard, she would beg and implore of us to receive Him as the food of our souls as often as we have the opportunity of doing so? Why should we hang back and refuse this pressing offer? You would consider it unmannerly to decline a gift from your

earthly mother, even though the gift were itself of no great intrinsic value. Nothing, we may be sure, will please our Lady better, or will more efficaciously help us to overcome our evil inclinations, than to receive our Lord as often as possible in Holy Communion. Yet some of us, perhaps, do not yet understand how much they lose by not availing themselves of the opportunities afforded them in such plentiful abundance here. If this jubilee of the Immaculate Conception were to have for its result a great increase in the number and frequency of our Communions, she, our Queen and our Mother, would, we may be sure, very greatly rejoice. Let us, then, afford her this joy to the utmost of our power; and let us be ready to go to some little trouble rather than miss an occasion of presenting ourselves at the holy table.

But whatever the precise nature of our particular resolutions may be, we shall all of us do well to make from our very hearts that offering of ourselves "without reserve," which is put into our mouths, as it were, in our customary prayer of self-dedication to Mary. Her answer to that self-dedication will be very different according to our several capacities. To one she could say, perhaps: "Here are some child's toys; go and play; don't get into mischief; and be ready to come when you are called; later on, perhaps, my Son may have some work for you to do; but for the present be as happy as you know how." And to another: "Take your gun and your fishing-rod; go and shoot and fish and hunt; keep the ten commandments; and be good to the poor. That is all that can be expected from you."

And to a third: "You are capable of something better than this; you must work hard, and attain success, if possible, in your profession; and hold yourself in readiness in later years to turn your position and your influence to good account for the cause of God and His Church." But to yet another: "Here is a big cross which my Son has in store for you, if you will keep yourself meanwhile in training, so as to be strong enough to bear it." Or: "For you there is a steep hill to climb, nothing less than the mountain of Christian holiness; and there is no time to be lost; so gird yourself forthwith to a task which will occupy a life-time." Or yet again: "Open your heart wide, and it shall be filled with the love of my Son, and when it is filled with His love, it shall be pierced and rent and wrung with sorrow, even as mine was; and in the depths of your most severe trials you shall know that happiness beyond compare, which is the lot of those who not only help my Son in His work, but bear Him close company along the King's Highway of the Holy Cross." But these things are for the few; they are the prizes of life; and we know not to which of us they may fall.

Meanwhile we can all join on our own behalf and on that of our companions in simple petitions such as these: "O Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, obtain for us by thy intercession that guidance of the Holy Spirit which we so much need for the choice of a state of life, or for the shaping of our conduct when we have made our choice! O Mary, Seat of Wisdom, obtain for us some share at least of that true wisdom, the wisdom of the Cross, which of all knowledge is

alone precious for its own sake. O Mary, Queen of Apostles, of Martyrs, of Confessors, obtain for us some share at least in that princely spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice which made Andrew rejoice in the midst of his torments, which inspired Campion with a very fire of zeal, which sent Xavier to lay down his life in utter destitution at the end of the earth, exhausted in the service of his Master.* O Mary, Queen of all Saints, obtain for us that during the century that is still young this College may become, in fuller measure than heretofore, what it ought to be in very truth, a school of Christian holiness. O Mary, conceived without the stain of original sin, O Mary, victorious over the enemy of our souls, obtain for us all a rich share in thy victory. So shalt thou be to us more truly than ever what thou hast ever been in the midst of all trials and temptations, of all disappointments and sorrows, the cause of our joy."

* The Feast of St Andrew falls on November 30, that of B. Edmund Campion on December 1, and that of St Francis Xavier on December 3.

X.

THE UNKNOWN GUEST *

"There hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not."—ST JOHN i. 26.

ST John the Baptist was preaching, on the banks of the Jordan, the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven. He had declared again and again that One greater than himself was to come after him. And the Divine Teacher, thus pre-announced, had come, but under circumstances quite unexpected even by the Baptist himself. For He had presented Himself not, at first, as a teacher or leader of men, but among those who flocked to the riverside to receive the baptism of penance. He, the spotless and stainless Lamb, whose life was to be offered as the all-sufficing atonement for mankind, would submit, along with the crowd, to those ministrations by which sinners were to be brought to repentance and the acknowledgment of their guilt before God. And since it was the mission of John, as the faithful paranymph or "friend of the bridegroom," not to win hearts to himself, but to bring men to Him who was the Bridegroom indeed, he at once began to take such opportunities

* December 11, 1904 (third Sunday in Advent).

as offered themselves of making Jesus known to those who were ripe for the knowledge. But the declaration must be made gently and by degrees; and he is content, in the first instance, to arouse the curiosity or the interest of some of his more faithful disciples by telling them, in the words of the Gospel appointed to be read to-day: "There hath stood in the midst of you One whom ye know not."

And these words most assuredly have their application to ourselves, even to the best and most fervent among us. In the midst of us, too, there hath stood One whom we have not known; whom we have not known as He deserves to be known; whom we have not known as we might have known Him, if we had been less unfaithful to the graces that have been given us. And that One is no other than He of whom St John spoke to his hearers.

He hath stood in our midst. He stands in our midst to-day. Many of us will receive Him sacramentally this very morning. Yet how little, and to how little purpose, have we known Him! If someone asks us: "Do you know So-and-so?" our answer, even though affirmative, may have many different degrees of meaning. We may say: "I know him by sight." Or: "I just know him to speak to." Or: "I have met him three or four times at a friend's house." Or again: "Know him? Why, I have known him since he was a child; and he is the best and dearest and most intimate friend I have." Now, which of these answers most nearly represents our knowledge of Jesus? We are familiar with His picture, with the representation of His crucifixion, or

of His Sacred Heart. We know, at least in outline, the story of His life on earth; though indeed it is much to be desired that even this merely historical knowledge were less vague than it often is, even in the minds of otherwise well-instructed Catholic boys. We know also the substance of His teaching; though here again there is plenty of room for improvement. But to how many of us is He the Beloved beyond compare? To how many of us is He in very deed our one best and dearest Friend, whom we would not for any consideration offend; whom we would do anything, at whatever cost, to please; for whom we are not only willing but eager to make any sacrifice? How many of us are there of whom it could be said with truth "Such a one is in love with Jesus"? No, even in the case of the best of us, our knowledge of our Lord is, comparatively speaking, only superficial; and those of us who know Him best will be the most ready to lament that they do not know Him better and more intimately.

The knowledge of our Lord, which we wish to acquire, is no merely speculative knowledge, like our apprehension of a theorem in geometry. It is a close personal intimacy with Him that we seek, or shall do well to seek; an intimacy of the kind that for some of us—as may legitimately be hoped—will ripen into a passionate, enthusiastic, overmastering, all-absorbing love. Such, as we have already been reminded in a former conference, was, in an eminent degree, the love which the saints had for our Lord; and who knows but that some of us, nay, perchance, more than a few of us, may attain to no small measure of

it? For this is a matter in which we cannot aim too high, in which we cannot be too ambitious. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," we are told, "with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." And although it is, of course, true that the command embodied in these words is substantially fulfilled so long as we keep ourselves, in act and in intention, free from grievous sin, it is also beyond question that the same words contain an invitation to strive after something much better than this. They contain an invitation not to rest content till we have learned—and it is a life-long lesson—to love our Lord to the very utmost of our capacity; to love Him with a love that will lead us to turn our thoughts, as it were, instinctively to Him at all vacant moments; to love Him with a love that will urge us to such a generosity as would fain rival, were this possible, His generosity to us; to love Him with a love whereof the fruit will be a spirit of self-sacrifice such as will seek and find its satisfaction, not merely in labouring, but in suffering for Him who has suffered so much for us. A love like this gathers up into itself a man's whole life, and all his conscious thoughts and words and acts, subordinating and directing them all to the devoted service of Him whom the Baptist styled "the Bridegroom." A love like this elevates and ennobles and gives force to a man's character, as the love of no merely human friend can elevate and ennoble and strengthen it; for there is no merely human friend who is or can be worthy, as our Lord is pre-eminently worthy, of a man's absolute and unreserved and

unstinted self-devotion. Such a love as this is the outcome—not indeed for all, but for those whom He chooses to call and raise thereto—of an intimate knowledge of our Lord. And even for the rest of us, who dwell on a lower level, it is well that we should have before our minds a high ideal of the possibilities—though they should seem to be unattainable by ourselves—of the transforming love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The subject is not unconnected—or may at least be brought into connection—with the great feast which we have been celebrating, the Jubilee Feast of our Lady's Immaculate Conception. Our Holy Father, Pope Pius X., in his Encyclical written for the occasion, has pointed out and has insisted that the fruit to be desired and hoped for as the outcome of the late jubilee is an increase in the knowledge and love of our Lord. For it is the office of our Lady to bring men to her Divine Son; to show Him to them, as a mother is proud to show her infant child to her friends; to claim their allegiance for Him, as a Queen-Mother claims the fealty of all loyal subjects to their infant Prince. It was Jesus whom the shepherds sought and found with Mary His Mother; it was Jesus whom the Magi sought, and they too found Him with Mary His Mother. It was on His behalf that she received their homage and their gifts; apart from Him she would have received nothing for herself, for, Mother though she was, she was ever the lowly handmaid of her Lord; nor would she have looked with favour upon anyone who should have honoured her with his lips,

while he dishonoured her Son by his actions or his evil intents. For the sinner who repents of his sin, she is full of pity; for the sinner who prays earnestly that he may have the grace to repent, and the strength to break his bonds, she is ready with most compassionate help; but for the sinner who is obdurate, or for those foolish ones who wilfully hover on the brink of sin and court its occasions, even she, the Mother of Mercy, could have only words of warning, of admonition most loving indeed, but most uncompromising. As we cannot please Jesus better than by truly honouring His Mother, so we cannot please her better than by our loyal and generous service of her Son; and we cannot hope to retain the fulness of her love, so long as we dally with His enemies.

"And after this our exile, *show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*" Such is the closing petition of that beautiful prayer which we all know so well and which we daily repeat together, the *Salve Regina.* To see Jesus and to be with Him forever; this is the sum of our hopes for the next world. To know Him better and to love Him better; this (with all that it implies) is the worthiest object of our ambition here below. For intimate knowledge and passionate love inevitably leads to earnest imitation, and in the earnest imitation of our Divine-human model lie all the possibilities of Christian heroism.

To be "in love with our Lord"; this were indeed, for all of us, the desirable consummation. But such a consummation is not to be reached in a day, or a week, or a year. Shall we ever reach it? The

highest degree of this love is, as has been said, beyond the reach of some. But there is no single one of us from the most fervent to the most lax who is not capable of advancing beyond his present state, or for whom it is not abundantly worth his while to make every effort so to advance.

How, then, are we to secure this advance or growth in the knowledge and love of our Lord? It is to be observed, in the first place, that we certainly shall not advance, and it would be absurd to expect to make progress in virtue, so long as we habitually and deliberately do things which we know to be displeasing to our Lord. It is not so much the magnitude of our faults that hinders us, as their deliberateness. A man may yield to a sudden and strong temptation, and may immediately afterwards be very sorry for his weakness. That under such circumstances he has fallen—even though it should be into grievous sin—is no proof that he does not habitually love our Lord. Rather, the sincerity of his immediate repentance is a sign that he does habitually love Him. But if a man knowingly and deliberately commits even small faults, and more especially if he does so habitually, this is a clear sign that much is yet wanting to the strength and thorough genuineness of his love. For a love that is really strong and genuine assuredly prevents us from doing even small things which we know to be displeasing to the person whom we love. Here, then, is the first means for advancing in the knowledge and love of our Lord, viz., the avoidance of *deliberate* sins and faults, whether great or small.

Or rather, this should be regarded rather as an indispensable condition of progress, rather than as a more or less desirable means for securing it. It is our Lord Himself who says: "If any man will do the will" of God, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God";* words which clearly imply that, in order to advance in the practical knowledge of spiritual things, it is imperatively necessary to act up to the knowledge which we already possess.

Of positive means for advancing in the knowledge and love of our Lord it will be enough to mention only one. It is one which we have often considered together; but it is also one of which it would be almost impossible to speak and think too often; I mean, of course, frequent Communion. There is hardly anything which seems to me more desirable for our spiritual well-being than that as many as possible of us should be regular weekly communicants.† And why not all of us? Why should any of us stay away? If any one of us should be in sin, he needs the help of the sacraments even more than those who are in the state of grace. If we are (as, please God, is the case) in the state of grace, why should we decline the gift that is offered us with so much love, and which—as we may be quite sure—our Lady would be the first to urge upon our acceptance whenever it is possible for us to receive it? Let us once

* St John vii. 17.

† Since these words were written, His Holiness Pope Pius X. has made it very clear that his wishes in this matter go far beyond weekly Communion. See p. 229.

more bring to mind those words of St Luke's Gospel about the disciples at Emmaus, that "they knew Him in the breaking of bread." * In the breaking of bread, in the Sacrament of His love, we too shall learn to know Him better and better.

* St Luke xxiv. 35.

XI.

NO ROOM IN THE INN*

"And she . . . laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."—ST LUKE ii. 7.

A FEW days ago there was performed in the hall of Lincoln's Inn, London, a mystery play called "Eager Heart." The story is briefly this. Eager Heart is a poor maiden living in a wayside cottage, who has heard that the king is going to pass that way, and that he will take up his quarters for a night somewhere in the neighbourhood. With all diligence she prepares the best room in her cottage for his reception, hoping that she may be the favoured one whom he will honour with a visit. Her two sisters, Eager Fame and Eager Sense, deride her expectations, and assure her that the king would never condescend to enter so humble an abode, and that he will, as a matter of course, seek hospitality with some of the great folk in that part of the country. She, however, has a strong premonition that her hopes are not ill-founded, and goes on with her preparations. When all is ready, a knock is heard at the door, and a poor woman with an infant at her breast begs the charity of a night's lodging. Eager Heart, sad and dis-

* December 18, 1904 (fourth Sunday in Advent).

appointed, yet feeling that she cannot refuse such a request, gives up to the distressed wayfarers the room which she had prepared for the king; and then goes forth into the night in the hopes of meeting him and at least expressing her good will to have entertained him had it been possible. On her way she meets a company of shepherds, who tell her they have seen a vision of angels, who have assured them that the king has already come, and is in the village. And as they return, they are joined by another pilgrim band, of eastern princes, who are making their way, guided by a heavenly light, to pay their homage to their sovereign lord. Needless to say, it is to the cottage of Eager Heart herself that they are guided. The infant is Himself the King, and the homeless woman is the Queen Mother.

That such a piece should be performed in such a place, in the very heart of busy London, is a testimony to that "divine discontent," as it has been called, which here and there at least is driving men to seek a refuge in the simple truths of the Gospel from the fancies, the follies, the fripperies of worldliness. Our present business, however, is with ourselves; and to ourselves we may make a profitable application of the story or parable of Eager Heart.

We have more than once had occasion to remind ourselves that to God all time is *now*. In His most solemn utterances He speaks in the present tense: "I am who am;" and again: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* And the remem-

* Exod. iii. 14; St John viii. 58.

brance of this may serve to set in a new light the anniversaries of the Christian year. They do not, like the anniversary of Trafalgar or Waterloo, merely commemorate events long gone by, but they are reminders of ever-present truths. Looking at the matter from our limited and merely temporal point of view, it may be rightly said, of course, that Jesus, as a human Child, no longer shivers in the cold winds that sweep the hill whereon Bethlehem stands; that His blessed Body no longer feels the smart of the cruel scourge; that His Sacred Heart is no longer wrung with grief for the blindness, the folly, the ingratitude of sinners. But we have to remember that the events and incidents of our Lord's life, His labours and His sufferings, and the dispositions of His Sacred Heart, were the manifestation and the human expression of divine attributes which are unchanging and unchangeable. And since to God all time is "now," it follows that from His point of view, or rather—let us say—from His ambit of view, the Child of Bethlehem and of Nazareth is cold and ahungered *now*, His body is torn and His heart wrung with grief to-day; and we too, so far as the weakness of our imagination and understanding will permit, are entitled so to consider the matter.

And this being so, we may begin to understand that a deep truth underlies the practice of the Church, when year after year, at this Advent season, she invites us to prepare once more to welcome our Lord, as though now for the first time He were about to make His appearance in His own world in human form; when year after year, at Christmas time, she

bids us to assist once more at His birth; when year after year, in Holy Week, she exhorts us to follow Him through all the painful stages of His sacred passion, to see Him deposited in the tomb, and, after mourning for His death, to rejoice at His resurrection on Easter morn. And this same usage of yearly commemorating, in due succession, the cycle of the mysteries of our redemption has its practical justification as well. All progress in the spiritual life of an instructed Christian is a progress in the knowledge and love of our Lord, and for this progress in the knowledge and love of Him an admirable provision is made in the round of the ecclesiastical seasons and festivals. Each year, if we are faithful, and if we do not allow ourselves to slacken off with the lapse of time, these seasons and festivals ought to mean more to us. Each year we ought to penetrate more deeply into their significance for ourselves, so that having again and again in our meditations accompanied Jesus from the crib to the Cross, we should gradually become more and more closely assimilated to our divine-human Model.

This is the ideal of a Christian life. But alas! in the case of many Christians the ideal is by no means realised. On the contrary, as time goes on they think less and less of Christmas and Easter, except as times of social festivity to which some more or less irksome religious observances are attached, observances which must be got through somehow, and which it is desirable to despatch with as little trouble as possible; till at last, or even perhaps within a very few years of leaving school, the great

feasts of the Church, as such, cease to make any but the most passing impression; the tender and affectionate love of our Lord which they are designed to foster, and the sense of human sympathy and sympathetic companionship with Him, die out almost entirely; and the only religious motives that prevail are those of the fear of eternal punishment, and perhaps a rather vague hope of heaven.

But for those who have been brought up as we have been this is plainly "not good enough"; and, in view of the rampant and unchristian worldliness which prevails outside, it is most desirable that we should determine beforehand that throughout our lives we will do what we can to profit by the recurrence of the great Christian festivals, and so far as our influence extends, and more particularly when we have homes of our own, to help others to profit by them.

But, to confine our attention to the immediate present; our chief affair just now, far more important (if we had the sense to see it) than even our studies —our chief affair at this holy season is precisely that about which Eager Heart busied herself, viz., to prepare a fitting welcome for our King, or rather, let us say, for the Mother and her Babe; for it was as a Babe in His Mother's arms that He chose to present Himself in His own creation. What sort of hospitality have we to offer? The best of us will be the keenest-eyed to see that the furniture of our poor hearts is no better than that of a poor cottage, or perhaps even of a miserable stable. But in a world which will have none of Him; in a world which, like

the crowded inn at Bethlehem, has no room for its Maker and its Redeemer; in a world which is too pre-occupied with the lust of the flesh, that is to say, with the indulgence of its sensual passions, with the lust of the eyes, or, in other words, with its pleasures and amusements, or again with that pride of life which manifests itself in a ceaseless struggle for place and power and social pre-eminence,—in such a selfish, heartless world our Lord is only too glad to accept any sort of refuge, however poor, *provided it be clean.* Do not overlook this proviso. You would not wish to invite Him into a shippon or cattle-byre reeking with filth. And yet such a place is but a faint image of the horrible state of a soul polluted by deliberate mortal sin. The filth of the byre is, after all, only natural to the unreasoning beasts that inhabit it; but man, when he defiles his soul by mortal sin, fills it with mud and ordure of his own free choice, and makes himself an object of disgust and horror to those pure eyes that can read the secrets of the soul. No, it is not into such an abode that you would wish to invite our Immaculate Mother and her Divine Son. And if such should be the state of your soul, nay, if such should have been the state of your soul at no distant date; ah! then it needs to be purged and cleansed not by any merely perfunctory act of repentance, but with many tears of shame and of compunction. Alas! Sin is so common in the world; it is so commonly treated as a trifle, and even taken for granted, that even among us, who live hedged in by all manner of safeguards, and surrounded by all the means of grace, even

among us, perhaps, there are many who have never had or who have lost that deep horror of mortal sin which is one of the characteristics of a sincere Christian. And if our conscience should tell us that it is so with us, then indeed we have abundant matter for prayer, at those times especially which are left to be filled up by our own devotion. Cry from your heart with the Psalmist: *Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea*—"Wash me yet more from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Though the sentence of absolution has been pronounced, and has, please God, restored me to the state of grace, yet there are many stains and blots remaining which need to be washed and washed and washed again before my heart can be said to be really clean. "Wash me yet more from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." *

But you would not only be unwilling to invite our Lady and her Son into a place that was downright filthy. You would not even wish them to enter a place that was full of dust and cobwebs. There is sweeping as well as washing to be done, and dusting as well as sweeping, in the poor chamber of our hearts. How would you like to say: "Come in, dear Mother; the place is substantially clean, though it is very stuffy and dusty and untidy, for I really could not be at the trouble of putting it in order merely for you"? Or, to translate these words into less metaphorical language: "I haven't, please God, committed any grievous sin, because I am afraid of hell-fire; but I

* Ps. l. 4, 12.

have gone as near to mortal sin as I dared; I am thoroughly selfish and vulgar, and I have no intention of being otherwise; my language is often such as you would not care to hear, and such as I should not care to use except in the presence of others as vulgar-minded as myself; and there are some pictures about the place such as you would not like to see; my one idea is to get as much enjoyment out of life as I can; and if it is only to be had at the expense of others, so much the worse for them. That's me, and there is my shanty; and if you care to find a corner in it to sit down and rest, you can." Or, worse still, perhaps: "My heart is like a house of public resort, and it is open to all sorts of strange guests, and I'm full-up at present. I really can't think about anything except my own amusements during the next three weeks; your presence would be a reproach to me, and I don't want to be troubled with a conscience when I am off duty; possibly I may find time to attend to you when the holidays are over; but at present there is no room in the inn."

Is this the sort of welcome which we should like to give to our Blessed Lady and her Son? Of course we should none of us dare to say this to her in so many words; but some of us may have reason to ask ourselves whether or no we deserve that reproach which we read in Holy Scripture: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."* We may have reason to ask ourselves whether, while we say nice things to our Lord and His Mother in our prayers, we belie them in our conversation and in our

* Isa. xxix. 13.

conduct. This is a question for the individual conscience. It is a question which some of us may find it profitable to ask ourselves.

Most of us, please God, will be of a very different mind from that which I have described. Most of us, it may be hoped, will be sincerely in earnest in our endeavours to give to Mary and her Son the best and most generous welcome we can.

XII.

BETHLEHEM*

"And the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass."—LUKE ii. 15.

"LET us go over to Bethlehem," in company with the shepherds, "and see this thing that has come to pass." It is but a mile or two from Migdol-Eder, the traditional site of the shepherds' watch-tower, to the cave in the scarp of the rock whereon the little city of Bethlehem is built; and there will be no difficulty in obtaining admittance, for it stands open to all the world. And what shall we find at the end of our short journey? A poor mother, forced by the crowded condition of the town to take refuge with her husband in the cave, and—her new-born Child. It is indeed a pathetic scene, one to move our pity and commiseration; but is it a theme for angels' songs, an event to be hymned "by a great multitude of the heavenly host"? To the eye of faith it is indeed a theme and an event worthy of being hymned, not for a few moments only in the hearing of a few poor shepherds, but with the whole court of heaven for audience through all eternity.

* Christmas Day, 1904; preached in the Church of St Peter, Stonyhurst.

For this weakling babe is none other than the great Omnipotent Himself; this seeming-pauper Child is He the very dust from whose treasure-house spangles the firmament with stars; this infant of but a few hours old is the Eternal Word, with God from the beginning and from the beginning God. For this is He of whom the prophet spoke: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a child; and His name shall be called Emmanuel"—*Imma-nu-El*, *Nobiscum Deus*, "God with us," "God in our midst."*

And why is He with us? why is He in our midst? And if, in His great love for mankind, He must needs become one of us, why does He come in such a guise? Why is the Omnipotent swathed in bands? why is the Eternal Wisdom speechless? why does He come in the character of a very outcast from the society of men, fain to borrow from the brute beasts themselves their stall for His palace and their manger for His royal bed of state?

Ah! brethren, we know well why He came. The reason is told in that other name of His which was given Him at the bidding of the Angel. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." The name Jesus means "Saviour," or more correctly, "God our Saviour." He is Emmanuel, "God with us," that He may be to us Jesus, "God our Saviour." And what are the things from which He has come to save us? Not poverty, or toil, or even suffering and sorrow. No; He has come to bless poverty, to sanctify toil, to make obscurity honourable, to sweeten suffering, to confer happiness in the midst of sorrow. He has come,

* Isa. vii. 14; St Matt. i. 23.

not to take away these things, but to hallow them. But there is one evil which He has come to take away, one burden which He has come to lift from our shoulders, and that is, as you know very well, the evil and the burden of sin. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins." * Yes, to save us from sin, and from the awful consequences of sin, therefore it was that He came. To save us from sin, yet not without our own co-operation, and therefore it was that He came in such a guise.

He would save us, not at His ease, as one who, standing in security on the bank, might fling a rope to a drowning man. Rather He would Himself plunge into the full tide of all our troubles, and make Himself the companion of all our struggles to reach the eternal shore. He would save us, not as some physician might prolong for a few years the life of a sick man, by prescribing suitable remedies and a wholesome diet; but He would give Himself for our food, and the drugs for our healing should be compounded in the pharmacy of His Sacred Heart, and should issue forth from His wounds. He would save us, not as some one, himself immune from the pursuit of justice, might point out to some fugitive from the arm of the law a way of escape; but He would take upon Himself the penalty of all our misdeeds, paying to the full the price of our ransom. It was thus that He would justify His name, His all-holy name, of Jesus, "God our Saviour."

Nor should it seem strange that on this Christmas

* St Matt. i. 21.

morning our thoughts should be carried forward for a moment to scenes of pain and of suffering. For, indeed, we do not read the lessons of Christmas aright unless we recognise that the life's work of Jesus in our service was—like His own seamless robe—all of a piece; that the swathing bands with which His infant limbs were confined presaged the nails that were to fasten His hands and His feet to the Cross, and that the hard manger wherein He was laid at His birth was a type and symbol of that harder bed whereon He was to die. The joys of our modern Christmas must not blind us to the fact that the first Christmas day saw the opening of a life not of self-indulgence but of sacrifice, or to the truth that if our Christmas joy is to be enduring it must be the joy which accompanies and springs from a generous determination to tread the path which Jesus, God our Saviour, has marked out for us.

So then, to return to the second of the questions asked just now, we shall be at no loss to understand the manner and fashion of His coming if we do not misunderstand its purpose. He would draw all men — all sorts and conditions of men — to Himself. He would arouse our attention, and awaken our interest; He would move us to sympathy and compassion; He would claim our loyalty; He would plead for our love. He came in feebleness that little children might know Him and love Him; He came in poverty that the poor might have recourse to Him with confidence; He came as an outcast that the very offscourings of the world might learn that even they are welcome to His royal

levée. He came in feebleness and in poverty that the rich and the great of this world might learn that their wealth and their greatness are of no account in His sight, and that He might wean us from worldly desires, and teach us to fix our hopes on the joys of heaven when He Himself will be our reward. His poverty was for our enriching; He would be weak that we might be strong; He would be a-hungered that we might be filled with good things;—nay, it was in a manner fitting that He who was to become the food of men should begin His life in a manger—the eating-trough of beasts; His harbourlessness was for our home-bringing; His faintness and weariness for our everlasting rest. But there is no need to labour the lessons of the stable of Bethlehem. Come and kneel by the crib and make your offerings to Him in company with the shepherds. Lay at His feet your acts of contrition for past sins, and your good resolutions for the future. Mary will receive them from you on His behalf; and from her you will learn to keep these things, pondering them in your heart during this holy season. Thus shall you sanctify it, and make it what it should be for all of us, in the truest Christian sense, a Happy Christmas.

XIII.

THE HOME OF PEACE*

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."—ST LUKE ii. 51.

IN the year 1850 there died in this college Father Burchard Freudenfeld, who, before he became a Jesuit, had been a distinguished officer in the Prussian army, and had fought under Blucher at Waterloo. It was a Sunday morning on which he died; and the "Spiritual Father" of those days came straight from assisting him on his deathbed to deliver his usual weekly address to the boys. There is at least one man now living who well remembers the occasion, and how the preacher (the late Father Fitzsimon) said: "I went on my knees by his bedside, and asked him on what subject I should speak to you this morning. His answer was: *Mon Père, tonnez contre le monde*—'Father, thunder against the world,'" or against "worldliness." Freudenfeld was a man who had, as the phrase is, "seen life," and he had seen through the hollowness of those things which men of the world, as such, make their idols,

* January 22, 1905 (third Sunday after Epiphany, Feast of the Holy Family).

wealth and pleasure, power and pride of place; and this was his dying injunction: *Tonnez contre le monde* —"Thunder against worldliness."

And yet, to "thunder" against the world may not always be the means best calculated to effect the desired result. For it is a sound principle, laid down by St Ignatius Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises*, that men are more powerfully and more permanently affected by truths which they have made their own by their own meditations and reflections, than by words, however strong and powerful, which they hear from the lips of another. And the satirists of all nations have thundered against worldliness, for more than a score of centuries, to very little purpose. It seems better, then, so far as it may be possible, to wean men from worldliness by helping them to see its hollowness for themselves, rather than to attempt to frighten them by denunciations of which the effect is often very transient.

It ought not to be necessary to explain, and yet it may be useful to repeat, that by worldliness we are by no means to understand the legitimate profession or occupation of a layman. For our Blessed Lord Himself, as we know, spent the greater part of His life on earth precisely in such an occupation, doing the work of a village artisan. And St Paul, even during the years of his apostolate, continued at least for a time to earn his living by the exercise of his trade as a tentmaker. But if you want to know what worldliness means, in its more aggravated forms, read once again Newman's description of the modern Dives, and of his pinchbeck counterfeit, "a

bad imitation of polished ungodliness." Or read, with attention and reflection, almost any "society" novel of the better sort, such as you have within your reach. There you will see, drawn to the life, the struggle for wealth, or for title and place, or for admission into the favoured circles of a class above one's own, to say nothing of the free rein given to the baser passions, held in check by no other motive than that of the fear of being found out and disgraced. The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—these things, as St John taught mankind long ago, are worldliness; it is these things that we are called upon to hate when we are bidden to hate "the world"; it is against the beginnings of these things that we have to be on our guard, lest—sooner perhaps than we think—we should be swept into the vortex.

Worldliness may be described as the habit of measuring and appreciating things as they appeal to our senses and our passions; unworldliness is the habit of viewing things as they are in God's sight, so far as the truths, which we know by reason and revelation, enable us to do so. Now, in the light of God's revelation we learn that many things which are commonly esteemed great—great wealth, great success, great learning, great titles and distinctions—are in His eyes of no account at all except so far as they may be directed to His service, while on the other hand very small things, if done in full and explicit submission to His will, are of the highest value. And when we come to reflect on the matter we begin to see that this is not such a paradox as at

a first glance it may appear to be. The suppression, in modern times, of those distinctions of dress which, in earlier days, marked off one class of society from another, bears silent witness to the growing conviction that a man ought to be judged by what he is, and not by the rank which he holds; and although there are and always will be large numbers of parasitic persons who are ever ready to attach themselves to the biggest man within reach, according to their various conceptions of bigness, sensible men are disposed to recognise—even apart from specifically religious considerations—that it is earnestness of effort rather than brilliancy of success which most reasonably claims respect. But in the light of revelation all this appears much more clearly. For as soon as we recognise that this present life is but a preparation for eternity, and that our eternal destinies depend neither on the cut and quality of our clothes, nor on the complexion and the features, nor on outward and visible success —whether athletic, social, political, or military—nor on intellectual abilities, but simply and solely on the *will* (aided, of course, by God's grace), it becomes evident that the apparently small affairs of daily life are indeed of the highest moment. For it is in and about these that the will is chiefly exercised; it is by these that the will is gradually trained to a readiness for more conspicuously heroic actions in case an occasion for them should present itself.

But after all it is not by abstract considerations such as these that men are chiefly influenced; and an object-lesson of example will usually be found to

count for more than a mere disquisition. And it was unquestionably part of God's purpose that the seductive attractions of the world should be overcome not alone by mere reasoning, but by a more powerful counter-attraction, the charm of the world by a more efficacious counter-charm, the love of worldly things by a stronger love which should draw us away from worldliness and lift us above it. And this counter-attraction, this counter-charm, this stronger love, is the attraction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the charm of His life and human character, His all-replacing love.

In particular we may find, and we ought to find, a potent antidote to the spirit of worldliness in our meditations on the hidden life (as it is called) of our Lord at Nazareth; a subject which is brought before our minds by to-day's feast. There was not, as we know very well, so happy or so peaceful a home in all the world. Nay, the little household at Nazareth was the very model of what truly Christian homes were to be throughout the ages. And in proportion, as other households have approached this model—not necessarily in external conditions, but in the internal dispositions of their inmates—the best sort of happiness has reigned there also. Now do we genuinely and honestly believe this? Of course we should all say "yes" with our lips; and we should say it without a shadow of conscious insincerity. But our belief, though sincere, is apt to be rather superficial, like the assent which we give to some statement that we read in the newspaper about a subject that does not particularly interest us. Here, however, is a

subject which ought very particularly to interest us, and therefore it is worth our while to make what efforts we can by meditation and prayer to bring the truth home to ourselves and make it our own.

Unquestionably, the conditions of life at Nazareth were not such as our uncorrected natural inclinations would lead us to desire for ourselves. There was, it need hardly be said, no luxury there; there were none of those cheap comforts and conveniences which in our days are within the reach of all except the very poorest; nor was there anything answering to the amusements, the excitement, and the constant change which the conditions of our modern civilisation have made a kind of necessity to so many men. We should have found there, on the contrary, the greatest frugality and simplicity; we should have found that, though everything was scrupulously clean, the food was of the plainest; that the privations were many and the hardships considerable; and that the days, begun and ended with prayer, were passed in what would have seemed to us a dull and monotonous round of the homeliest kind of manual labour. Nor was this all. Not only did our Lord, and His Blessed Mother, and His foster-father St Joseph, endure the privations and hardships of poverty; not only was there in their domestic life an entire lack of those pleasures and amusements which we find so indispensable; but (not to speak of our Lord) the hearts of Mary and Joseph, at least, were filled with apprehensive forebodings of many sorrows that were to come. There was much, as we learn from the Gospel—from St Luke's Gospel in

particular—which our Lady herself did not understand.* Yet she had received more than one premonition, clear enough in its general import, though obscure to the point of darkness in the matter of detail. One so enlightened as she could hardly fail to be aware that the symbolical offering of her infant Son in the Temple was but the foreshadowing of a real and painful sacrifice in which He should be the Victim; and Simeon's prophecy that He was to be set for a sign that should be gainsaid, and that the sword of sorrow was to pierce her own heart, left no doubt that great and severe trials were in store.† Once, twelve years later, the Child had left His parents without a word of warning, and to His Mother's loving remonstrance had replied, in effect, that His Father's business must have precedence over all family ties;‡ and she could not but know that this temporary absence was but the prelude to a longer and more painful separation, for indeed the three days of the tarrying in the Temple were a kind of symbol of the three years of the public ministry, as well as of the three days of the entombment.

And yet, notwithstanding these forebodings, not Jesus alone, who knew all things, but Mary and Joseph too, were at peace in that happy home at Nazareth; and we shall be indeed fortunate if we can attain to a share in that blessed peace, that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," of which St Paul speaks—a peace which is proof against all the hardships and privations, against all the apprehensions and misfortunes (as they are called),

* St Luke ii. 50. † St Luke ii. 34, 35. ‡ St Luke ii. 49.

to which the life of man on earth is liable. What, then, was the secret of their holy peace and joy? It will be found, perhaps, in the constitution of two elements, perfect human love, and perfect submission to the divine will. And by love we are to understand, not a sort of selfish softness, often miscalled by that name, which seeks its gratification at the expense of another, regardless of his real interests; but an unselfish or self-forgetting affection which made each member of that holy household live for the others, entirely devoted to their well-being. Yet even this would not have been sufficient without that other and predominating element of a complete and perfect subordination to the divine will. Both Mary and Joseph knew very well, and their faith in the truth never wavered for a moment, that trials and tribulations are an integral part of God's ordinance for the perfecting of His chosen ones; they knew that: *Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum* —"To them that love God, all things work together for good"; * and therefore it was that neither present privations nor the prospect of impending troubles had any power to disturb their holy calm.

And now, what is the lesson for ourselves? Not, certainly, that we should forego all amusements because there were none at Nazareth. Not that we should all of us embrace voluntary poverty because Jesus of Nazareth was poor. But that, both at school and after we have left school, we should keep our pleasures and amusements within bounds; that we should treat them not as ends in themselves, but

* Rom. viii. 28.

as necessary aids to our work; and again that, instead of fruitlessly indulging either in golden day-dreams or in gloomy apprehensions of the future, we should find our peace in the doing of God's holy will here and now, in the faithful discharge of the ordinary duties of our daily lives. It is true, of course, that for every one of us God has a mission in the world; that we are all of us here to do some good during the short span of our lives. But what our opportunities will be hereafter we none of us know, and one of the lessons of Nazareth is that boyhood is not merely a time of waiting but a time of preparation; and that the little things of boyhood are our training for the greater things of manhood. The lessons of our Lord's youth are of course valuable, primarily for our own youth. But there is one lesson taught us by the Holy Home of Nazareth which we shall do well to carry with us throughout our lives, the lesson of opposing to the rampant worldliness with which we shall soon find ourselves surrounded, the firm bulwark of a true Christian simplicity. Plain living and high thinking is good for all sorts and conditions of men.

XIV.

THE STORMS OF LIFE*

"And Jesus said to them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm." †—ST MATT. viii. 26.

LAST Sunday's feast of the Holy Family brought before our minds a pre-eminently peaceful scene of domestic life. The Gospel appointed to be read to-day transports us to quite different surroundings. Like other inland waters surrounded by mountains, the lake of Genesareth or of Tiberias is subject to storms as sudden as they are violent; the wind springing up in the valleys and rushing down them in unlooked-for gusts and squalls, often to the imminent peril of the fishing craft. Such a storm burst upon the lake one day—*κατέβη λαῖλαψ ἀνέμου εἰς τὴν λίμνην—descendit procella venti in stagnum*, as St Luke accurately says, when Jesus with His disciples was crossing from its western to its eastern shore.‡ The weather, it would seem, was reasonably

* January 28, 1905 (fourth Sunday after Epiphany).

† "Rebuked," *ἐπετίμησε*. The same word is used in the Greek text of all those accounts. In the Vulgate, St Matthew has: *Imperavit*—"He commanded," St Mark and St Luke: *Increpavit*—"He rebuked."

‡ St Luke viii. 22.

calm when they started; for Jesus, weary with the day's labours, slept in the poop. The disciples, accustomed though they were to the ordinary dangers of navigation, were this time thoroughly affrighted, and the more so because in the midst of the raging winds and waves, and although their boat was half filled with water, the Master still slumbered undisturbed. And in their terror they roused Him from His sleep, crying out: "Lord, save us, we perish," and even, as St Mark has it, expostulating with Him: "Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish?"* But He, rising up, rebuked the winds and the waves, and there befell a great calm.

Now we all know that human life has often been compared with a voyage, in which the mariner is exposed to many vicissitudes of calm and tempestuous weather; and we know too that in the various incidents related of St Peter's boat in particular is to be found a parable of the fortunes of the Church at large and—at least by application—of the individual Christian.

The storms which descend upon the soul of man, as the winds from the highlands of Galilee swept down upon the lake of Tiberias, are of various kinds; but they may be roughly classified under three heads. There are, in the first place, storms of temptation; when the passions, whether of lust or intemperance or avarice, or again of pride or anger, are aroused, with or without the help of evil companions; and when it seems almost impossible not to yield, so powerful are the feelings which draw or drive us

* St Matt. viii. 25; St Mark iv. 38.

along, and which seem to take possession of our souls even as the waves of a tempestuous sea poured in over the gunwale of Simon Peter's boat and threatened to swamp it. Then again there are, in the second place, storms of adversity or tribulation; as when a painful sickness comes upon us; or when some great loss or disaster shatters a man's fortunes and ruins his prospects in life; or when he must needs endure harshness or injustice or persecution at the hands of others; or when he has, in some way or other, brought himself low, and made himself the victim of his own folly. And thirdly, there are the storms, so to call them, of depression, of discouragement, or of anxiety; of anxiety whether about our own affairs or about those of persons who are dear to us, or in whom we are interested, or for whose welfare we are responsible; storms which may beset us even apart from any notable disaster or misfortune, and which are sometimes no less hard to bear than those which arise from tribulation strictly so called. *Temptation*, *tribulation* or adversity, and *anxiety*, with which may be classed depression and discouragement, these then are the three heads under which we may range the storms of life.

Now the lesson of the Gospel narrative, as we shall do well to observe, is not that we are to expect our Lord to work miracles, even in our own souls. It is true that, on the particular occasion which we are considering, He did work a miracle, for He "rebuked" the winds and the waves, and forthwith they were stilled. But He did not rebuke the winds and the waves till He had first rebuked His disciples

for their want of faith. Sometimes, indeed, when we call upon Him with great earnestness, He will, in compassion for our weakness, answer our prayer by removing the cause of our distress. But this will not usually be the case. When St Paul prayed that he might be delivered from the sting of the flesh which tormented him (and which would seem to have been something in the nature of severe bodily pain), the answer to his prayer was, not that his burden should be lightened, but that strength should be given him to bear it.* And when our Lord Himself, giving expression to the cravings of His human nature, prayed that the bitter chalice of His passion might be taken from His lips, He added: "Yet not My will but Thine be done"; † and, as we know very well, He drained the bitter chalice to the dregs. And so, in our degree, it will be with us. For the most part our Lord will leave us to battle with the storm, just as a wise master allows his pupil to wrestle with the difficulties of a classical text or of a mathematical problem, because he knows very well that this is better for the learner in the long run than to be lifted over every stile, and to have every obstacle smoothed out of his path. It is our business, then, not to delude ourselves with the fallacious notion that in time of trouble we have only to call on the name of the Lord, and that our trouble will forthwith cease; but so to prepare and fortify ourselves in times of peace that when trouble comes we may be able with God's help to endure it manfully.

* 2 Cor. xii. 7-9. † St Luke xxii. 42.

And here there is a further point to be considered. It is true, but it is not quite the whole truth, to say that for the most part God will leave us to battle with the storm. The incident related in to-day's Gospel should serve to remind us, moreover, that it is precisely when the tempest rages most fiercely, precisely when we are most strongly beset by temptation, tribulation, anxiety, or depression, that we seem to have lost sight of our Lord; that we no longer feel the encouragement of His near presence; or, to keep to the similitude suggested by the narrative, He is, as it were, asleep in our souls. If we could wake Him, if we could, in those moments of severe trial, have the inward sense of His presence that we once had, all would be well; the temptation would appear in its true light as a seductive illusion; the tribulation would be welcomed as drawing us nearer to Him; our depression of spirits would be recognised as a passing cloud, and the serenity of holy peace would be restored to our hearts even in the midst of our trials. But we cannot wake Him as the apostles did. And just as they ought to have trusted Him sufficiently to be sure that, even though He was, in His bodily nature, asleep, He would not suffer them to perish; so He expects us also to preserve our confidence in Him, even though His sensible consolations have been withdrawn from us for a time. For, though we cannot always, in moments of stress and trial, revive the tender feelings that were ours in times of more special fervour, yet it is always in our power, with the help of His unfelt grace, to weather the storm. It is as though

a vessel could be so constructed that by the right manipulation of the rudder or the tiller the highest waves could be surmounted, so that the vessel need never perish. Such a craft was, of course, never devised, and never could be devised. But for the purposes of a similitude we may imagine such a craft; and the application of the similitude is this. The rudder or tiller of the vessel in which we are making the voyage of life is our will; and this no violence of the storms which beset us can wrest or wrench from our grasp. What happens in spite of our will is never imputed to us as sinful; but the will to do right, the will to be faithful, the will not to yield, is, with God's help, always within our power.

How, then, are we to train ourselves for the right guidance and governance of the will in such soul-storms as we have been considering? Cut-and-dried resolutions, as we may call them, are not the chief remedy here. Definite resolutions have indeed their proper and most important place and purpose in the spiritual life. But they will not do everything for us. Definite resolutions principally concern points of external practice, and their observance may accordingly depend to some extent on outward conditions. But here we are in need of a means or a remedy that shall be sufficiently pliable to be capable of adaptation to all conditions. We need, in particular, two things, viz.: (1) sound principles, and (2) that skill in applying them which can be acquired only by practice.

As an instance of what is meant by "sound

principles," we want, in the first place, a firm grip of the truth that we *can* hold out, God helping. The poet's words: *Possunt, quia posse videntur*—"They can, because they think they can"—have long since passed into a proverb; and the thought to which they give expression lies at the root of all strenuous and persevering endeavour. Then, again, we want a grip, no less firm, of the truth that it is *worth our while* to hold out; that the struggle is an affair of life and death, in which our eternal destinies are involved. For even though we should repent after we have sinned, we shall be for all eternity the poorer for having yielded; and, moreover, if we should be again and again unfaithful to our trust we run the very serious risk of at last missing the grace of repentance altogether. We want, too, a firm grip of the truth that it is *unworthy of our Christian manhood* to yield; and that we have far more reason to be ashamed of giving way to temptation than we should have to feel ashamed of showing cowardice under fire. And lastly, we want a firm grip of the truth that sin is not merely an exhibition of folly and of poltroonery in the sight of that "cloud of witnesses" (to use St Paul's phrase) who from the clear heights of heaven behold our struggles; but an act of base ingratitude to Him who made us for Himself, and who became Man, and lived such a life and died such a death as we know Him to have lived and died for us, in order that, our birthright having been restored to us, we might, with His help, preserve it for ourselves.

Now a firm grip of these principles is to be gained

only by serious meditation and earnest prayer. It does not come to the thoughtless and the careless, or to those who merely listen, with more or less of patience or of impatience, to the words of another. We have to make these principles our very own, and in order that we may do so, we must make use of those indispensable means which have been just mentioned. We must *think* and we must *pray;* and although the second is the more important of the two, neither means can be neglected with impunity.

But all these truths and principles, in the abstract, will not avail to stay and steady us in time of rough weather, unless we have learned by actual practice to use them for the succour of our souls in our own soul's need. If we are successfully to weather the greater storms of our manhood, we must learn to weather the lesser storms of our boyhood and youth. This must be our main and principal preparation. It would be foolish in the extreme to delude ourselves with the self-made promise that we shall resist temptations in after life, if we do not accustom ourselves to resist them now. The temptations will be stronger; and, with this prospect before us, we cannot afford to let our will grow weaker. And weaker it most assuredly does grow every time that we yield, just as it grows stronger every time that we overcome.

And the same is to be said of those less violent yet dangerous storms that are set up by adversity and by depression. We must learn, by practice, to keep our confidence in God under the lesser trials of

our present life; we must learn to persevere in spite of discouragement now, if we would strengthen ourselves to bear the more serious discouragements, the more pressing anxieties, of our maturer age. It is our Lord Himself who warns us that the cares of life, no less than the pleasures of life, draw men away from God. And they do this by absorbing the attention so that at last people come to persuade themselves that they have no time to attend to religion; or, short of this, the time which, as a matter of strict duty, they devote to prayer, is too often filled with distractions which they make little effort to avoid.

Needless to say, this ought not to be so. Temptation, tribulation, anxiety—all these things ought to throw us back upon God, they ought to be as so many signs and signals warning us to have recourse to Him with special earnestness. But unless we accustom ourselves to observe these signs and obey these signals in the smaller trials of our boyhood and youth, we must not flatter ourselves that we shall begin to do so when we are older.

Nor is our preparation for the temptations and trials of the future to be confined to our moments of temptation and trial now. We prepare for greater storms not only by our conduct under lesser storms, but also by taking care not to let ourselves become slack and remiss in our ordinary lives. No man can feel a reasonable confidence that he will oppose a successful resistance to temptation when it comes, if he is habitually heedless and off his guard. Slackness in our ordinary duties, slackness in prayer,

slackness in our studies, slackness in games, these things are an exceedingly bad preparation for the storms of life. There is a fund of good sense and a serious significance in the schoolboy phrase: "Buck up, you fellows!"

XV.

WHEAT AND TARES*

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came, and oversowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. . . . And the goodman of the house . . . said . . . : An enemy hath done this."—ST MATT. xiii. 24-28.

IT is a curious though probably a quite undesigned coincidence that whereas the Gospel of last Sunday set before us a scene in which Jesus slept while His disciples were in peril, thereby affording them a trial of their faith, the parable which is read in to-day's Gospel tells us of an evil deed, a deed of darkness, done "while men were asleep." And we may at least avail ourselves of the coincidence, such as it is, to connect the subject which is to engage our attention this morning with that which we took occasion to consider last week.

We were then reminded of the important truth that we must be prepared to battle with the storms of temptation and of trial, even though our Lord should seem to be asleep in our souls, that is to say, even though we should find ourselves without the comfort and support of His sensible consolations. We are

* February 5, 1905 (fifth Sunday after Epiphany).

now reminded, or we may at least take occasion from the parable of the wheat and the tares to remind ourselves, of the mischief that may befall us through our own somnolence. It was "while men were asleep" that the tares were oversown upon the good seed.*

Week by week and day by day, in the various instructions which are addressed to us or which we hear read, the good seed of the word of God is sown in our hearts. But, as we all know, the enemy of our souls is always on the watch to catch us napping (as the phrase goes), and to use his opportunity for the sowing of tares in the Master's field. And unfortunately, he usually finds, even among Christians, who should know better, allies to assist him in his hateful work, or to do it for him.

The good seed of the word was, in particular, most abundantly sown in our hearts during our last retreat. Let us carry our minds back to that time and try to recall some of the lessons, in substance so old and familiar, which we then learned over again. It was brought home to us, as though we had never heard it before, that we were created by God for Himself, and that in Him alone can our souls find rest in this life, and happiness for eternity. The folly of sin, the foolhardiness of sin, the cowardice of

* What follows has no claim to be regarded as more than a legitimate "application," as distinct from a systematic "exposition," of the parable. It is at least doubtful whether, in the parable, there is any implication of carelessness in the phrase "while men were asleep." And yet it is not without significance that precisely this phrase is used, instead of the less graphic expression "during the night."

sin, the base ingratitude and meanness of sin, these truths, also, we learned once more; and we were touched, perhaps deeply moved, with shame and compunction for the transgressions of our past years, if indeed we had ever had the misfortune to offend God grievously. Once more God in His mercy pierced our flesh with the fear of His terrible judgments, and this fear strengthened our determination to avoid not only sin but whatever might prove to us an occasion of sin, or might bring us, sooner or later, within the avoidable danger of temptation. And then from the thought of our own folly and cowardice and ingratitude we turned to that of the love of our dear Lord; and when we had listened to the preacher's eloquent and impassioned words on this subject, we might all of us have said, with the disciples at Emmaus: "Did not our hearts burn within us, whilst He spoke?" And our love of Jesus was reinforced, was strengthened and sweetened, by that love and tender devotion to His Blessed Mother which was so powerfully and impressively inculcated upon us. So that, at the end of the exercises, we all felt that we had enjoyed an experience to be remembered, an opportunity by no means to be wasted by subsequent neglect; and among other things, that we had been taught to pray as some of us, perhaps, had never known how to pray before. And then, on the Sunday following the retreat, we all made our petition with those same disciples at Emmaus that our Lord would not depart from us, but that, having taken up His abode in our hearts, He would stay with us and continue to bless us with His presence, even though the special helps

which had been at our disposal during those three happy days had of necessity been withdrawn, because the Father to whom we owed them must needs return to his labours in a wider field.

And then again, not very long afterwards, our devotion was stirred, or should have been stirred, once more, by the Jubilee of our Lady's Immaculate Conception, so forcibly recalling to our minds the uncompromising nature of the warfare which we are called upon to wage against sin, that we may become less unworthy children of her who is without spot or stain.

And now let us ask ourselves, and let us answer the question honestly, each one for himself in the secret chamber of his own conscience, whether the high hopes and anticipations for which our retreat and the solemn celebration of that great festival would seem to have afforded good grounds,—whether these high hopes and anticipations have been as fully realised as might have been wished. Is it perhaps the case that, notwithstanding all the encouragement we then received, and all the resolutions we then made, some of us have since become rather slack in our prayers? It is, indeed, not always easy directly to compare our interior disposition at the present moment with our disposition four or five months ago; but there may be some external signs by which we can partly estimate any change that may have taken place. How do we stand, then, as regards those valuable moments which elapse between our arrival in church or chapel, and the commencement of public services or devotions? Are we eager, like the

woman whose faith is praised in the Gospel, to touch, as it were, the hem of our Lord's garment, by turning to the best account those margins or selvages of time? Or have we, perhaps, again fallen into the habit of lingering and loitering on the way to the chapel, as though the spending of a few moments with our Lord were an evil to be deferred as long as possible? And then, again, our behaviour in the chapel itself, if we should find that it leaves something to be desired in the matter of reverence, might afford some index of a falling off. It will be useful, then, for each one of us to put the question to his own conscience: "Have I, since my last retreat, allowed myself to become remiss in the matter of prayer?" And next after prayer we shall do well to question ourselves on the subject of slackness in our studies, and even in our ordinary every-day games. Nor should it be regarded as strange that matters such as these, which at first sight might seem to have nothing to do with religion as such, should be mentioned as suggesting suitable topics for self-examination. Year after year we all of us take part in a solemn dedication of our studies to the Immaculate Mother of God; and we have—or ought to have—sense enough to know that study and play, and all our lawful and laudable employments, are part of our service of God. "All things, whatsoever you do," says St Paul—and we meditated on these words of his not so very long ago—"All things whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." To do what we have to do in a languid and listless fashion, and to spend a

good deal of our time in doing nothing in particular, is certainly not in accordance with the counsel that everything we do should be done in the name of our Lord.

There may, then, be some reason to fear lest, so far as religious matters, and the religious aspect of our ordinary actions, are concerned, we have, during the last few months, to some extent, gone to sleep. Is it so? Have we at least had our periods, our too protracted periods, of spiritual slumber, even though (thank God!) we have waked up sufficiently, at intervals, to screw ourselves up to the point of confession, and of preparation for Holy Communion? If it has indeed been so; if we have indeed gone to sleep in spiritual matters; then, at least to ourselves and in God's sight, let us acknowledge our negligence. For the first step towards a serious amendment is to recognise that in the past there has been something wanting, something amiss.

And now there is a further question to be asked, and it is this, viz., whether, while we have been somnolent, while we have been slack and careless, the enemy has been at work among us. An illustration, a sort of parable with which we may supplement the Gospel parable of the wheat and the tares, may give point to the question. Let us suppose that a boy, while in the act of saying his prayers, falls asleep. His book, we may imagine, is open at a print of the crucifixion, or of the Sacred Heart, or of our Lady. While he placidly slumbers, some evil-disposed person covers up this picture with one of those vulgar, flashy, not very edifying picture post-

cards, the sure sign of a decadent and morbid taste, which are to be found in the shop windows of every town in the kingdom. The boy wakes, and finds himself confronted no longer with a representation of our Lord or His Blessed Mother, but with some simpering and posturing figure from the stage of the modern music hall.

The application of this little supplementary parable is sufficiently obvious. It may be well for some of us at least to think a little, and to reflect whether anything of this kind has happened to us. We finished our retreat with our minds full of the thought of Jesus and Mary. We had learned to recognise them as our best friends. We were resolved to make it our chief business so to live that to the best of our ability we might please and serve them. We had or thought we had, a fixed and firm determination to shape our conduct in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, and to keep ourselves in all things under the patronage and protection of our Lady. To use St Paul's words, read in the Epistle for to-day: "The word of the Lord dwelt" in us "abundantly," or seemed to do so.* But, as we gradually slackened and relaxed our efforts, some one perhaps began to entertain us with conversation of the kind that may best be described as "shady." At first we did not at all like it; for we had made up our minds once for all to avoid this kind of talk. But, being off our guard, we began to find it amusing; we tolerated and condoned it; and at last we began to engage in it ourselves. And

* Col. iii. 16.

thus, our minds becoming full of vain and frivolous and worldly and vulgar thoughts and ideas, the hallowed images of Christ and His Mother were gradually covered over and obscured in our imaginations; covered over and obscured as with a veil, not of lenten purple, but of tawdry frippery. And then we began to reason within ourselves, and perhaps with others also, that such or such conduct which we had resolved to avoid was, after all, not sinful, or not so very sinful. And in the end, perhaps, from thoughts and words, actions may have followed of which it is to be hoped that we are now ashamed. To return to the language of our Lord's own parable, the good seed had been oversown with tares, "while men were asleep"; and "the goodman of the house" —that is to say, our Blessed Lord Himself—had reason to say: "An enemy hath done this thing."

Has this been my case? Or worse than this, have I been so foolish, so forgetful of my responsibilities, so ungrateful to my Creator and Redeemer, that, not content with allowing the field of my own heart to be oversown with tares, I have taken part with the enemy, and helped to sow the tares in the hearts of my companions? Have I helped to lead them into sin? Or have I at least helped to render them more frivolous, and worldly, and vulgar? If so, I have much to be sorry for, much to lament, much to be ashamed of. And to be sorry for these things, to lament them, to be ashamed of them, these, as has been already implied, are the first steps towards a genuine amendment of life. And precisely because these are the first steps towards a genuine amend-

ment, therefore it is to be understood that the purpose of these words is not to reproach anyone, but rather to invite each one to look into himself, and see whether he has reason to reproach himself and to be ashamed of his conduct. This self-reproach and this salutary shame are his own affair, and must be the fruit of his own thoughts and prayers.

Above all, however regrettable our conduct may have been, we must not lose heart. In every single case it will at least be true to say that matters have not been so bad as they might have been; in many instances, no doubt, serious efforts in the direction of improvement have already been made; and even in the worst cases it only requires a little manly effort and determination in order, with God's help, to remedy the evil. But we must not neglect the safeguards and the means which spiritual common-sense prescribes. The safeguards are the shunning of occasions of sin, the refraining of the tongue and of the senses from all that is allied to sin, and, in particular, the avoidance of aimless and listless idleness even during our playtime. We should, as far as possible, always be doing something, and something which is capable of being done, as the Apostle counsels us, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." And as regards our work, properly so called, we should do it to the very best of our ability, not for the sake of a prize or any other reward or distinction, but just because it is God's will, and because God knows best what is good for us. These are some of the most obvious safeguards against temptation. And the means are, first and foremost, earnest and

persevering prayer; secondly, serious thought and meditation; and last, but by no means least, the frequent reception of those sacraments which our Lord has instituted for the express purpose of bringing us back to His feet, and of keeping us united to Him. Do you think that our Blessed Lady, whose help we so often and so constantly implore—do you think that she would counsel us otherwise than thus?

XVI.

JOY IN SADNESS*

"Brethren, ye became followers of us and of the Lord; receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that you were made a pattern to all that believe, in Macedonia and Achaia."—1 THESS. i. 6, 7.

It is a characteristic feature of the teaching of the Gospel, and of the New Testament generally, that it is full of apparent contradictions. And one of these, suggested by the words just quoted from the Epistle of the day, may usefully occupy our attention for awhile. In the Sermon on the Mount, which was assuredly a most solemn utterance, our Lord said, very explicitly: "Blessed are they that mourn." And He exemplified this teaching not only in His own life, but in His treatment, if we may so call it, of His Blessed Mother, whom He loved so much more than any other of His creatures. For not only was He Himself, in the words of the prophet, "A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity," but for her too He mingled a full cup of most bitter, and heart-rending grief. Nevertheless, St Paul, in a passage which is familiar to all of us, bids his Philippian converts, and through them bids us also,

* February 12, 1905 (sixth Sunday after Epiphany).

to "rejoice in the Lord always."* Now it is plain that there is at least the semblance of a contradiction here; for how can it be right to "rejoice always" if it is also a good and blessed thing to "mourn"? Mourning and rejoicing would seem to be as opposite in their nature as love and hatred, or as pleasure and pain.

And yet it is quite certain that no real contradiction is meant. The disciple assuredly did not intend to set aside or to correct the teaching of his Divine Master. There must then be some explanation of the antithesis, some way of reconciling counsels which on a first hearing seem to be so diametrically opposed to one another. What the explanation is we all know after a fashion; but like other important truths that lie beneath the surface of life, and so are in danger of being overlooked or forgotten, this is a matter which deserves careful investigation and serious meditation. It was not without reason that Father Sarasa wrote a little book on *The Art of Always Rejoicing;* for the attainment of habitual joy is an art that must be learned—like other arts—by the study of its principles, by practice, by experience, and by reflection on our experience. And this same "art of always rejoicing" is of importance, not merely or principally because a cheerful disposition in this present life is desirable on its own account, and as a means of getting on in the world, but because the more truly and genuinely we are happy here, the more perfectly shall we be happy for all eternity in heaven.

* Phil. iv. 4.

However, our immediate business is with the question: How can we reconcile the counsel to "rejoice always" with the clear and uncompromising statement: "Blessed are they that mourn"? In these words of our Blessed Lord those are pronounced "blessed," or happy, who *in the common estimation of men* have much to make them sad. This, roughly yet not inaccurately speaking, is the meaning of the beatitude of the mourners. And in this statement of the true meaning of the beatitude is already contained a hint of the answer to the difficulty which has been proposed. For there are depths in the human heart which lie beyond the range and scope of the common estimation of men. In those depths or secret recesses the man who has much to make him sad may yet be happy; and the counsel to "rejoice always" is a counsel not to allow the common causes of human sadness to disturb the inmost peace of the soul. "Let the peace of God rejoice in your hearts," writes St Paul to the Colossians;* and again, in the same passage in which we are bidden always to rejoice, he says to the Philippians: "May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," or, in other words, which transcends the ordinary judgments and the common estimation of men, "keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."† For the Apostle knew very well that Christian joy, as such, is not of a turbulent or boisterous character, but essentially calm and tranquil. The joy with which we are bidden to "rejoice always" is not the joy of jubilant exultation, for this is only

* Col. iii. 15. † Phil. iv. 7.

occasionally within our reach; but the joy of a peaceful and unshaken confidence in God. And this kind of joy, a joy founded on confidence, is by no means incompatible—however much at first sight it may appear to be so—with the endurance of much affliction. To repeat the same thing in other words, it is one of the precious secrets of the Christian faith that it enables a man to be happy, with a true and genuine happiness, even though his body should be racked with pain, his heart wrung with sorrow, his mind harassed and perplexed with many anxieties. For, however deeply the sword of pain or of sorrow or of anxiety may pierce, it cannot touch that very centre of his being, which may be at peace, and which will be at peace so long as, there at least, he cleaves closely to God.

But there is more than this to be said. A man may go beyond the point of merely preserving his peace of mind and his confidence in God in the midst of trials and tribulations; for he may find a motive for joy and thankfulness in the trials themselves, as St Paul did when, in his own words, he "gloried in his infirmities."* No man will do anything really great, that is to say, no man will do anything that is great in the sight of God, unless he has either endured many and severe trials, or else made up for the lack of these by determined and persevering self-denial in some shape or form. The life of every Christian who desires, not merely to save his soul, but to do something for his Divine Master, must be, in some degree, a Way of the Cross. It is

* 2 Cor. xi. 30; xii. 5.

the way which He chose for Himself, and which He has marked out for us; and as often as we find that our feet, even in spite of ourselves, are set in that way, we have abundant reason for joy and thankfulness, if only we have the sense to see it.

Of this combination or union of apparent contradictories, as illustrated in the lives of ordinary lay Christians, St Paul's Thessalonian converts afforded a striking example or object-lesson; as the Apostle himself bears witness, when he declares that they "received the word in much tribulation," and therefore, as it might seem, with abundant cause for sadness; and yet immediately adds that they received it also "with joy of the Holy Ghost," so that they were "made a pattern to all that believe, in Macedonia and Achaia," that is to say, throughout those regions in which the events that had passed at Thessalonica were known.

Now it may seem out of place, perhaps, to speak of such things as severe pain and bitter sorrow and harassing anxiety to those who are still young, and who have, ordinarily speaking, little or no experience of these things. But after all, though still young, we are—for the most part—no longer children, but men in the making; and the sooner we can gird ourselves to our serious preparation for the experiences and the trials of manhood, the better for ourselves and for those whom it will be our lot to influence in later life. We read in to-day's Gospel that "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal," and by means of which

"the whole was leavened."* It is our function as Catholics, and as Catholics who have enjoyed exceptionally good opportunities of assimilating the principles of our faith, to be as a leaven in the world in the midst of which we shall have to live. And, as we see by the example of St Paul's Thessalonian converts, one of the means by which this function is performed is the example of joy and cheerfulness under the most untoward conditions.

We considered the other day the subject of preparation for the temptations which most of us will have to face before we are much older; the question now is how we are, in our boyhood and early youth, to prepare ourselves for the trials and sorrows, as distinct from the temptations properly so called, of our maturer age. For the present it will be enough to consider only one means, which is, however, so far-reaching and comprehensive that it may be said to include all others, or at least to go before them all and to suggest them. It is set before us in that eminently practical and common-sense Epistle of St James with which we should do well to make ourselves more familiar than most of us are. *Tristatur aliquis vestrum? Oret*—"Is any one of you sad?" he says: "Let him pray."† Even here at school we have our rubs and our trials; very real trials, though they be on a small scale. We have had a misunderstanding or a falling-out with some one, and we feel lonely even in the midst of many companions. Or we have met with some disappointment, and we are discouraged. Or our

* St Matt. xiii. 33. † St James v. 13.

digestion is upset, and we feel out of sorts, or, in our own language, "rotten." All these, and others which each one may imagine for himself, are causes of sadness or, let us say, downheartedness, in greater or less degree.

Now the point to be attended to is this, that whatever the cause of our trouble may be, it ought always and without exception to throw us back upon God; it ought always and without exception to drive us, as it were, to prayer; to prayer of the sort that comes from the very heart; to prayer of the sort that is spoken of again and again in the Psalms as a "cry" to God. It matters not what words we use, or even whether we use any words at all—except so far as it is difficult to keep up a prayer of any intensity without some help from words; but whether our cry be articulate or not, the important thing is that in all our troubles, great or small, we should at once, with the utmost promptness and the greatest perseverance, have recourse to God. It was to a very agony of prayer that our Lord betook Himself when His human soul was "sorrowful even unto death"; and He is our supreme model and exemplar.

If only we will perseveringly apply this sovereign remedy, we shall learn, sooner perhaps than we expected, what it is to have peace in the midst of trials; for our prayer will, in a manner, bring its own answer; and the habit of having recourse to God will engender that unshaken confidence in Him, that deep conviction of His near presence, which, even without the feeling of sensible consolation, is enough

to stay and steady the soul under all buffets. Nay, perhaps we may even go a step beyond this, and learn to be thankful for the rubs and disagreeables of life, because they draw us nearer to our Lord, and make us less unlike to Him. And having learned these lessons while we were young, we shall carry them with us, please God, into the harder trials of our later life.

So far we have been considering those kinds and those causes of sadness which ought, if we were less imperfect than we are, to leave our inward peace undisturbed; those kinds and causes of suffering and of sorrow which, however severely they try us, ought not to make us unhappy at the very core and centre of our being. But there is one thing that may and that ought to make us downright unhappy, if it should come within our experience; there is one misfortune that may well disturb our peace of mind, nay, that should leave us no peace till we have rid ourselves of it; and that is *sin;* I mean, of course, grievous or mortal sin. If a man or a boy is conscious that his soul is soiled with that foul stain, then indeed he does well to be unhappy; then, for his own good, he cannot be too miserable till he has cleansed his heart and reconciled himself with God. To any one who has learned to live and to walk by the light of faith it seems almost incredible that an instructed Catholic who knows what sin is should be able to lie down to rest with the guilt of a grievous offence upon his soul. It is like going to sleep with a poisonous serpent coiled up on the pillow beside us, or with the sword of Damocles suspended by a

thread over our heads. Let us at least never omit to end the day with a fervent act of contrition, of "perfect" contrition as it is called, based on the love of God and of Jesus Christ crucified. And may the fear of God's judgments—if at any time His love should grow cold within us—bring us to our knees at the feet of His unworthy minister on the earliest possible opportunity after such a misfortune as the commission of a mortal sin.

XVII.

UNSELFISHNESS, OR LOSS AND GAIN*

"He that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."—ST MATT. x. 39.

BY a fundamental and ineradicable law of our nature we all want to be happy. And, as we saw in the foregoing consideration, notwithstanding certain words of Holy Scripture which at first sight might seem to imply the contrary, God, who formed and fashioned our nature, wishes us to be happy, and wishes it far more strongly, as well as far more wisely, than we wish it ourselves. We, perhaps, fancy that we shall be happy when we have left school and gained our freedom, or when we have got our commission, or when we have succeeded to our inheritance, and the like. But God wishes us to be happy *now*, to be happy "all the time" in this life, and to be happy for eternity in the next. He wishes us to enjoy, or rather to experience, a certain measure of the best kind of happiness that is attainable here, and to be filled to overflowing with a much more perfect and inconceivably higher kind of happiness hereafter. And in these two little words, "measure"

* February 19, 1905 (Septuagesima Sunday).

and "kind," lies the whole difficulty of the problem. For it is just because our desires are unmeasured and misdirected, it is just because we grab too greedily at the wrong kinds of happiness, or rather, at the mere shadow and semblance of happiness, here, that to so large an extent we miss the reality both here and hereafter.

We have already considered the subject of happiness under trials and afflictions. But after all, trials and afflictions happen to most of us only now and then; and we ought to know something of the dispositions which are best calculated to render us habitually happy, or happy under normal conditions. Now it may sound like a paradox, yet it is most unquestionably true that the true secret of habitual happiness lies in the acquisition and cultivation of unselfishness. And it is no less unquestionably—as well as more obviously—true to say that the acquisition and cultivation of unselfishness is an essential element in the formation of a manly Christian character. To this subject of unselfishness, of unselfishness of the right sort, we may profitably devote some attention in the present consideration.

We all admire unselfishness—in others, and we all dislike its opposite—in others. But it would be a great mistake to imagine that unselfishness comes to ourselves as a kind of natural endowment. The untaught and untrained child (as we should know very well if we could recall our own earliest experience) is profoundly and aggressively wayward and selfish. His only notion of what is good for him is to have everything that he takes a fancy to, and to

have it at once. It is a matter of some trouble, and it usually requires the occasional application of coercive measures, to explain to him that this won't do; that it is *not* good for him; that if he eats all the jam to-day there will be none left for to-morrow, and that meanwhile he will be very unwell, and will render himself liable to other pains and penalties. By slow and painful degrees he learns that it "pays" better to wait for things. He discovers that on the whole his parents know better than he does what is good for him; and moreover, if a conflict of views should arise, they have the last word. They can lock up the jam, and produce the coercive rod. So far, however, he has not advanced beyond selfishness, though his selfishness has come to be of a more enlightened and less short-sighted character. But in course of time he advances a little further in practical wisdom. He learns that there are others besides his parents of whom account must be taken in the scheme of domestic economy. He discovers that aggressive selfishness is disagreeable to them; he finds that they too can be disagreeable by way of retaliation; and that, if harmony is to be preserved, all parties concerned must practise some degree of mutual consideration. If he is not quite a spoiled child he learns to say "thank you," instead of taking kindness as a right; he learns to be kind to others in his turn; and generally speaking, he begins to shape his conduct in accordance with those usages of civilised life in which so much of ordinary comfort and convenience depend.

But if his education is conducted, as it ought to be

conducted, on religious lines, he learns a good deal more than this. He discovers that he must not only wait till to-morrow for to-morrow's jam, but that he must wait till the next life for perfect and entire happiness, and that the way to be happy here is to accustom oneself to do without pleasant things, and to put up with unpleasant things, for the sake of the everlasting reward that is in store for those who are faithful to the end. If the parents know better than the child what is good for the child, much more does God know better than either child or man what is good for both. And God too, in a much higher and fuller sense, will have the last word, if we should be so foolish as to set our judgment in opposition to His wisdom. That "God wishes us well"; that "God knows best" what is good for us; and that "God will have the last word" if we oppose Him, these are three elementary but fundamental lessons of the spiritual life.

Nevertheless, even these considerations and motives, though plainly belonging to the domain of religion, are no less plainly of a self-regarding character, and do not precisely answer to the ideal of unselfishness. So much so, indeed, that it has been made a reproach against the Catholic faith that it professedly supplies and applies motives which are essentially selfish, and that it does no more than to substitute for worldly ambitions what has been cynically and sarcastically described as "other-worldliness." That it does supply such motives, especially to those who are incapable of rising to anything higher, must be frankly admitted.

And in doing so it does well. It is better that men should be led to keep the commandments by the fear of hell or by the hope of heaven, than that they should not keep them at all. But the Catholic faith by no means stops short at providing these motives, as we shall presently see. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom";* but it is not its highest manifestation.

Meanwhile let us return to the young person whose development we have been considering. As he advances in age, in knowledge, and—let us hope—in grace, he begins to see that it is only a poor kind of unselfishness which makes us considerate for others, and kind to them, simply because an instinctive and half-conscious calculation has led us to the conclusion that such conduct on the whole and in the long run promotes our own individual comfort and well-being; or even that it will powerfully help us towards the attainment of the boon of life everlasting. Sooner or later, unless the individual in question be incurably coarse-grained and vulgar, more generous instincts are awakened; and if he is true to them, if, instead of crushing them underfoot, he faithfully and courageously follows them, he will begin at last to have some inkling of the great truth which is implied, if not expressed, in the words: "He that loseth his life . . . shall find it."

"He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." The text has reference, primarily no doubt, to that supreme act of heroism by which the martyrs laid down their lives for justice' sake, and received their

* Ps. cx. 10.

reward—the reward of eternal life—in heaven. But it has a more extended meaning than this, and signifies, among other things, that, as was said just now, the true secret of attaining happiness, even in this world, lies in our gradual emancipation from the slavish trammels of a narrow selfishness. It is by forgetting self, by setting our narrower self aside, that we find our true selves, that larger and nobler self which is, as it were, brought into being when we realise our true relations to God and our fellow-men.

This may seem, perhaps, a hard and obscure saying. But an illustration or two may help to make it clear. Imagine a very small child looking out of the window of a train in motion. If the train ran very smoothly the child might be excused for imagining that the whole surrounding country was rushing and whirling past him; that the changing landscape was like a sort of diorama or kinematograph contrived for his benefit; and that he himself was the centre of all this movement. He might be excused, I say, for imagining all this for a few moments; but it is plain that, so long as he entertained such a delusion, he could form no rational idea of the actual scheme of things, and of his own very inconsiderable place therein. So, too, until less than three hundred years ago, nearly everyone imagined that this earth of ours was the centre of the whole universe, round which not only the sun and moon, but all the fixed stars, revolved in the course of every twenty-four hours. But as instruments of precision were invented and improved, and

diligently applied to the observation of astronomical phenomena, it gradually became more and more impossible to explain them on this "geocentric" hypothesis, as it is called. But when it came to be recognised that the earth is, relatively speaking, a very small globe, revolving round the sun like the rest of the planets, and that the sun itself is only one among millions of more or less similar luminaries, each travelling through space along its own determined path, then at last the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies were found to be all reducible to one single law, the law of gravitation, and everything fell into its place in one harmonious system.

Now, just as the abandonment of the old geocentric astronomy was the first step towards a rational conception of the physical universe, so our emancipation from what may be called the "autocentric" fallacy, from the silly notion that "I," forsooth, am the pivot round which my little world revolves, is a first step towards a rational conception of the moral universe. And the more thoroughly a man grasps the truth that he, personally, is but a very diminutive item in a very large whole; that the general interests are of more importance than those of the individual; and that this principle holds good not only for mankind at large, but for all those groups and associations in which human society is legitimately organised, the family, the school, the army or navy, our country, the Empire, the Church; in a word, the more thoroughly a man can learn to sink his personal interests in the pursuit of the common weal, by so much the more does he act as becomes a man.

It is thus, and only thus, that he can hope to acquire something of that true greatness which belongs to those alone whose aims are noble, precisely because they are unselfish. Even from a purely temporal point of view there is truth in the words: "He that loseth his life . . . shall find it"; for it is only when a man has resolutely shaken himself free from the shackles of a narrow individualism, that he finds his true place as a part of the larger corporate self, to which, by the very constitution of human society, he belongs, and whose life he shares. And it is just because so many men never do emancipate themselves from this bondage to their lower and narrower selves, that they remain overgrown children all their lives.

But here a difficulty arises. On the one hand it seems reasonable, in the abstract, that the individual should not only be subordinated, but should voluntarily subordinate himself, to the interests of any group or body of men of which he may happen to form a part, from a football eleven upwards. On the other hand, the tendency to seek, first and foremost, our own individual welfare is, as has been said, fundamental and ineradicable. And in fact, if God were left out of account, there would be no adequate and sustaining motive, extending to every department of life without exception, for this sinking of the individual self which we have been considering. Why should any man immolate himself, as the Positivists would have him do, on the altar—so to say—of a headless humanity? It would be as though one should recognise that the earth is only

one of the planets, and yet should fail to perceive that all the planets revolve round the sun. But as soon as the claims of God are recognised, all becomes, for practical purposes, clear enough. We sink ourselves, and to a certain extent renounce or deny ourselves, not merely for the sake of mankind at large, or of our fellow countrymen, or of any body of men, or of any particular person, taken apart, but primarily and principally for the sake of God, who is the Lord of all men, and who has at heart the best interests both of mankind at large and of every individual member of the human race. By self-abnegation for God's sake a man will in the long run best serve both God and his neighbour; and he need never fear that his own interests will suffer because, for God's sake, he relegates them to a quite subordinate place. The labourers in the parable (read in to-day's Gospel) who went into the vineyard trusting to the fairness of the master, were paid at a higher rate than those who had bargained with him for so much a day; and the parable itself contains, among other things, a gentle admonition to St Peter, who, as making terms with our Lord, had said: "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee: what, then, shall we have?"* It is as though Jesus had replied: "Nay, ask not what the reward shall be, but be thou solicitous for thy Master's work, and He will not forget thee."

And lest it should be objected that the standard which has been put before us in this consideration is too high for the ordinary layman, it may be well

* St Matt. xix. 27.

to remind ourselves that day by day, and many times in the day, we all of us make with our lips those petitions of the Lord's prayer: "Hallowed be *Thy* name, *Thy* kingdom come, *Thy* will be done," petitions which, if we made them with a full and sincere heart, would be the most perfect expression of the very best kind of unselfishness; the unselfishness which regards our own personal and individual concerns as of indefinitely small importance by comparison with the one supreme end of the carrying out of God's all-holy will.

XVIII.

COUNTING THE COST*

"Which of you, having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it: lest, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish."—ST LUKE xiv. 28-30.

THERE are two kinds of encouragement, a good and a bad kind. Of course, speaking generally, there are many wrong ways of doing a thing, and there may often be many right and legitimate ways, like the "nine-and-sixty ways of composing tribal lays," of which one of our modern poets has sung. But for our immediate purpose the distinction between a right and a wrong kind of encouragement may suffice. And these two kinds of encouragement may be illustrated by two imaginary incidents, one of which, if impossible and absurd, is at least intelligible, and the other both intelligible and possible. Suppose that a member of our Committee for Athletic Sports were to endeavour to persuade a very small boy to take part in the steeplechase by explaining to him that a steeple-

* February 26, 1905 (Sexagesima Sunday).

chase is a kind of contest in which the competitors have nothing to do but to saunter across a perfectly level and newly-mown piece of turf. That would obviously be a wrong kind of encouragement; because it would be based on false pretences, on a palpable misrepresentation of plain facts, and could only lead to disappointment. But suppose this same member of the Committee were to go to a big boy and say to him: "The steeplechase is an 'event' which requires plenty of pluck, endurance, and activity; now you are strong and sound in wind and limb, and you have a very fair chance of winning the prize, if only you will get yourself into good condition by taking more exercise and by abstaining from an immoderate consumption of"—let us say—"potatoes." This, as we shall all recognise, would be a right and reasonable kind of encouragement. And it would be right and reasonable because the difficulties of the enterprise are not minimised, and because the means that must be adopted to secure a fair prospect of success are plainly stated.

All this, it need hardly be said, is by way of a parable; and to the application of the parable we will come back presently. Meanwhile, it may be remembered that the subject of our last consideration was unselfishness; the process of our gradual emancipation from the trammels of a narrow and self-centred individualism; the process of learning to find the centre of our life, where indeed it is, in God. Now, we must not be surprised if we do not take in the truth on this subject all at once. To some it comes home at a definite and assignable

crisis in their lives, as with an illuminating flash. On others it dawns more gradually, through the silent action of divine grace, anticipating, prompting, accompanying, and rewarding their own serious efforts at self-conquest, and their own earnest meditations and prayers. Some never take it in at all, except in a rather vague and undefined form; and to the end of their lives they are actuated mainly by self-regarding motives; perhaps because they are not capable, or are hardly capable, of being influenced by any others. But, whether suddenly or gradually, it is only to the few that the truth appeals with such force as to issue in the precious fruit of a substantially complete self-surrender to the more immediate service of God, and to the closer following of our Lord, who set before us the supreme example of human unselfishness.

And it is in this connection that the illustration or parable with which we started may perchance prove serviceable. There are some among us, necessarily a small minority, who have made up their minds, or think they have made up their minds, to become candidates for the priesthood or for the religious life; and, among a large number of boys in a Catholic college, there will always be some who have had thoughts of adopting such a course, but who have not come to any final decision on the subject. Now, to the first it is plainly desirable to give the right kind of encouragement; to both it is no less desirable to avoid giving the wrong kind of encouragement; and most of all, it is desirable to avoid giving the wrong kind of encouragement to the

wrong kind of people. Now in this particular matter of aspiring to the priesthood it would be foolish to ignore the fact that a great many of us are "the wrong kind of people." Some of us at least are as far from possessing the qualifications which are indispensable, or all but indispensable, in a candidate for the priesthood (at any rate in this country), as the small boy, in the illustration, would be from possessing the qualifications necessary for competing in the steeplechase. And this, unless in any individual instance it be due to personal negligence or unfaithfulness to grace, is no more to a man's discredit than it is to be unable to play, for instance, a galop on the xylophone. Most of us, presumably, cannot even play the piano; and most of us are not suited for the priesthood. Just at present I am concerned with those who are suited, or who think or hope that they are suited, or who are in doubt whether they are suited, for this high and holy calling.

We have all heard it said, and it is undoubtedly the truth, that for a vocation to the priesthood the primary condition, and by far the most important condition, is *fitness* for the life and duties of a priest. But what are we to understand by this "fitness"? We are to understand, not merely, or even principally a certain modicum of acquired knowledge or of intellectual ability. If this were so, then every young man who has received a good education might enter upon the ecclesiastical state, or the religious life, without more ado; which no one would be so foolish as to assert. The fitness which is

chiefly needed is a certain moral fitness, or fitness of character; or, in other words, the qualification depends much more upon the will than upon the understanding.

It is true of course that a firm and determined will, strong enough to override even considerable obstacles, is a necessary qualification for conspicuous success in any profession whatsoever. But there is this distinction to be observed, that in other professions mediocrity is in many cases inevitable, and in those cases tolerable; whereas within the gates of the sanctuary mediocrity—I mean mediocrity of character—would be quite out of place. But a firm and determined will is not all that is required. The direction of the will has to be considered as well as its strength. And here we are brought back to the subject of our last consideration. A very selfish man may have a very strong will. He may, as the saying goes, be as obstinate as a mule. But a selfish man, unless he can emancipate himself from his selfishness, will never make a good priest. What is needed for the priesthood, or for the religious life, is the capacity not merely for isolated acts of self-denial as occasion may arise, but for what may be called a substantially complete self-renunciation.

And for the better understanding of this statement it may be worth while to make, with some care, a comparison between the life of a priest and that of a member of certain lay professions, so that we may see clearly where the difference lies in this matter of self-renunciation. A boy who enters the navy, or a man who obtains and accepts a commission in the army,

cheerfully and courageously accepts the prospect of having some day to endure great and perhaps terrible hardships, of extremely painful wounds, and of death, it may be, on the field of battle or in some naval engagement. And no one, please God, would wish to belittle the heroism which is needed to take such a risk as this in the cause of duty, and of loyalty to king and country. Indeed it may well seem, at first sight, to put quite into the shade any sacrifice of self which is made by the ordinary priest or religious, whose life may not improbably be—at least in its outward circumstances—of the most humdrum and uneventful description. And assuredly we who are priests have good reason to look to it that we are not altogether outdone in devotion to duty by those who are engaged in the service of a temporal sovereign. Nevertheless, there is an important and fundamental difference between the two cases. In the first, the hardships, the wounds, the painful death, are contingencies which may or may not arise; and in the meanwhile, service in the army or navy may be regarded as a not-altogether-unpleasant profession; one which allows considerable intervals and opportunities for legitimate enjoyment; one in which the hope of advancement, and of honour in the sight of men, has its recognised place in the programme. So too, though the life of a member of the medical profession, for instance, entails—as a condition of success—much arduous toil, severe mental strain, and many contingent discomforts, nevertheless this profession, like that of the naval and military services, may legitimately be chosen, not out of pure

benevolence, but as a means of livelihood, and of making provision for one's family in the years to come.

But the candidate for the priesthood, or for the religious life, if he is really in earnest, renounces, from the first, not only all prospects of having what is called "a good time," but also all thoughts of secular ambition and advancement. His one desire is, or ought to be, to spend himself and to be spent in the service of our Lord, and of his fellowmen for our Lord's sake. It may be that he is physically incapable of enduring severe hardships such as we read of in the lives of the saints and of other men of heroic virtue; it may be that the opportunities for such endurance do not come in his way; but his ruling aim and purpose is to work for God, to the very utmost of his powers, in however obscure and inconspicuous a position, till he can work no more; and this without any thought of a visible and tangible reward in the present life, and even without making the hope of the everlasting recompense the mainspring of his actions. Such comforts and amusements as may be within his reach are, or ought to be, for him nothing more than means to fit him for his work; and they are means to be employed as sparingly as may be, consistently with keeping himself in such health and vigour as he may need for God's service.

To give without reserve all that he has, even though, like St Peter's fishing-boat and nets, it should be little enough—this is the ideal. No one would pretend that all priests without exception have

invariably lived up to it. Least of all, would any individual priest affirm that he himself does not fall short of it. The utmost that he will say is that he tries to keep it before his mind; and we may be well assured that the effort to regulate one's thoughts, words, and actions by this standard involves a daily struggle. Not necessarily a struggle with what is commonly called temptation; but at least a daily wrestling with God in prayer. For every priest knows well that if he were to grow slack in prayer he would find, only too soon, that he is no more exempt than are other men from that inexorable moral law of gravitation which was long since expressed in the words: "The corruptible body weigheth down the soul." *

Such, then, is the ideal of the priesthood and of the religious life. And to those of you who have either in view, I would say: Are you strong enough, or can you with God's grace render yourself strong enough, to aim at this ideal? This is, for those whom it may concern, a very plain and practical question. For, unless a man is strong enough, or with God's grace can render himself strong enough, for this, then the priesthood, or the religious life, is not for him; God does not call him to it; and he will be well advised to choose some other career. Better far to be an upright and conscientious layman than to be a slack and self-indulgent priest. A vocation to the priesthood is a pearl of great price. If you do not possess, or cannot "raise," the price, you must do without the pearl. Nothing could be more

* Wisd. ix. 15.

foolish than to stretch out your hand to grasp it, if you are either unable or unwilling to pay for it.

Now, it may seem, perchance, that what has been said is calculated to daunt and dishearten candidates for the priesthood, rather than to encourage them and cheer them on. But it may be doubted whether such a prospect as has been held out is calculated to deter anyone who is really fit, or who is likely to be able to render himself fit, for the ecclesiastical or the religious state. No one, it is to be hoped, thinks of these states of life as easy-going and naturally agreeable. Nevertheless there is always the possibility that a boy who has grown up from tender years with the idea that he is going to be a priest, should neglect to face beforehand the difficulties that lie before him, and should thus let himself drift, as it were, from school into a bishop's seminary or a noviciate, with a fair prospect of drifting out again when he finds that the conditions of life are not what he had bargained for or reckoned on. But a boy or a young man who has once quite clearly understood that a vocation is an invitation to give himself to God without reserve, and to serve our Lord with entire self-devotion, instead of being frightened or discouraged by the prospect of difficulties and possible hardships, will, when reminded of them, feel himself stirred up to gird himself betimes to a very serious preparation for the work which, God helping, he hopes to take in hand. He will prepare himself by earnest and persevering prayer; he will prepare himself by unfailing diligence in all his ordinary duties; he will prepare himself by self-denial and

self-control even during his school days; and last but by no means least, he will prepare himself for his life of service by the exercise of charity and of kindness to all with whom he comes in contact, and of consideration for the wishes and feelings of others. If he will make this kind of preparation now, he will find that the difficulties of later years have been in great measure forestalled; and he will begin even now to enjoy some portion of that hundredfold of peace and happiness which is promised, even here in this life, to those who renounce all for Christ's sake. To such I would heartily recommend that admirable collect of St Benet Biscop, which was recited in Holy Mass the other day:—

Deus, cujus munere beatus Benedictus Abbas, ut perfectus esset, omnia reliquit; da cunctis evangelicae perfectionis semitam ingressis, ut nec retro respiciant, nec haereant in via; sed ad te sine offensione currentes, vitam aeternam apprehendant.

"O God, by whose gift blessed Benedict left all things that he might become perfect; grant to all those who have entered on the path of perfection, that they may neither look back nor loiter on the way, but that without stumbling they may run forward to Thee, and may so attain to eternal life."

XIX.

MEDITATION*

"Lay up these my words in your hearts and minds; . . . teach your children that they meditate on them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down and risest up."—DEUT. xi. 19.

THE Gospel appointed to be read on the first Sunday in Lent sets before us the temptations of our Lord, and offers, plainly enough, a profitable subject for our consideration.† As the Gospel narrative itself suggests, temptations are of various kinds. There are those which arise from our animal instincts or appetites, symbolised by the suggestion to "turn these stones into bread"; there are those which assail us through the higher senses of sight and hearing, and through the example and influence of our fellowmen, symbolised by "the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them"; and there are those which spring from our own personal pride—which last may be regarded as the devil's own special department.

But indeed these various kinds of temptation are so closely connected one with another, the triple

* March 12, 1905 (first Sunday in Lent).

† St Matt. iv. 1-11.

alliance of the devil the world and the flesh is so much more intimate than any federation known to the history of diplomacy, that—after having made the distinction for the sake of clearness—we may treat all three classes together for the purpose of practical utility.

Now in speaking of temptation it is, of course, impossible to say anything which will precisely fit the care of everyone without exception. Some of us know already, and only too well, what it is to be severely tempted; some of us may have learned by a sad experience what it is to fall under temptation; nay, it is possible that some may have played the devil's part in tempting others and leading them into sin; and such persons may be assured that they have laid up for themselves a harvest of terrible suffering whether temporal or eternal, which can only be escaped by heartfelt compunction and resolute penance. To some of us, on the other hand, temptation of the graver kind is happily known only by hearsay, and not as a matter of personal experience. But, however it may be with us under present conditions, it is unquestionably true to say that, within a few months of our leaving school, many of us, if we are not on our guard, will find ourselves in the very midst of dangerous occasions of sin. And therefore it behoves us to make ready in time. I say, if we are not on our guard, for it is an old proverb that the nation which desires to secure the blessings of peace must hold itself in preparation for war—*Si vis pacem, para bellum.* And so, paradoxical as it may seem, those (and there are many such)

who pass through life without ever being grievously assailed are, commonly speaking, just those who have most assiduously taken the best means to fortify themselves against such assaults.

How, then, are we to make the needful preparation, so as not to be taken unawares when the time of trial comes? It has been said above that an all but essential means of self-preparation is to get a firm grip of the fundamental truths of religion, and of sound and rational principles of conduct. But the further question now arises—How are we to get this firm grip of truths and of principles? And here the Gospel narrative may help us.

Our Lord, as we learn from St Matthew and St Luke, prepared Himself for *His* temptations by a fast and a retreat (if we may so call it) of forty days. And we too, following that divine example, are accustomed, in our annual retreats, to make our own special preparation for the temptations and the difficulties of the school year which is to follow it. And yet it would be a mistake to regard our annual retreat as something quite apart from the rest of our lives at school. On the contrary, those three days are a time during which we devote ourselves with special earnestness to certain exercises which have a place, or ought to have a place, and a most important place, in the programme of our daily occupations. And the whole of our school life, passed as it is in comparative retirement from the world, may be considered as a sort of retreat in preparation for the spiritual combats of our later years. This is what it ought to be. This is what it is in the case of those

of us who are thoroughly in earnest. This is what it will be if we choose to make it so.

Now in our annual retreats there are two things to which we most especially devote ourselves, viz., serious thought and fervent prayer. We make it our most particular business, during those days of silence and recollection, to *think* and to *pray;* to "ponder in our hearts," after the example of our Blessed Lady, those truths which concern our eternal welfare, and to pray with all our might in the full conviction that we cannot, without the divine assistance, work out our salvation by our own unaided efforts. To think and to pray; both exercises are, in the highest degree, salutary; and although the second is more indispensably necessary than the first, yet, as we have more than once been reminded, we cannot with impunity neglect either. And our prayers will sooner or later lose something of their fervour and not a little of their sincerity, unless they are supplemented or accompanied with serious thought and consideration. Hence the great importance of what is called meditation or mental prayer, of which it may be said that it must form an almost inseparable accompaniment of vocal prayer if the latter is to rise above the level of mediocrity.

Do not imagine, or allow yourselves to be persuaded by any foolish companion, that meditation is an exercise suitable only for priests and religious, or that it is something exclusively or specially "Jesuitical." There are plenty of meditation-books written expressly for lay folk; and among those in more common use here in England, and more readily

accessible to us here at Stonyhurst, side by side with the excellent little work of the late Father Richard Clarke, S.J., entitled, *The Life and Ministry of Jesus*, you will find the no less admirable *Simple Meditations*, and *Meditations on the Passion*, by the Abbot of Ampleforth. And if longer and fuller meditations are preferred, it would not be easy to specify any which surpass those which are contained in the *Retreat* of the Bishop of Newport. Or again, if you will take the trouble to read the leaflet on the "Method of Mental Prayer," published (chiefly for the use of the laity) by the Catholic Truth Society, you will find that it is described as having been drawn up "according to the great Doctor of Prayer, St Alphonsus Liguori," who was certainly not a member of the Society of Jesus, but the Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, or of the Redemptorists, as they are commonly called. His method is, indeed, substantially identical with that of St Ignatius Loyola; but that only confirms the very simple truth that meditation is an exercise not peculiar to Jesuits and their pupils or penitents, but common to all Christians, and one with which we ought, all of us, to be familiar.

All this being assumed, three very practical questions may reasonably be asked, viz. (1) When are we to meditate? (2) What are we to meditate about? (3) How are we to do it? To the first of these questions the answer is that it is mainly a matter of taking a little pains to fix for ourselves some convenient time for this holy exercise. Our days at school are necessarily crowded with occupa-

tions, and it is plain that no set time can be allotted by authority for this purpose. It is for us to find a time for ourselves; and the most suitable time is, of course, before morning prayers. It only needs a determined will to rise promptly when we are called, and not to dawdle over our toilet, in order to secure at least a few moments to ourselves before the public prayers commence. And the habit which we acquire, or can, if we choose, acquire here, is one which many of us will be able to carry with us into our future lives, when our morning prayers will be no longer a duty performed in public. On Saturday evenings, too, our school regulations afford us a very favourable opportunity, of which Sodalists in particular are exhorted to avail themselves, for devoting rather more time to meditation than would commonly be possible on an ordinary week-day morning. Or again, if a boy does not see his way to adopt either of these suggestions, or to attempt anything in the way of a formal meditation, it is a useful practice at least to employ our thoughts, while retiring to rest, rather about what concerns our eternal salvation than about mere trifles. But, indeed, those of us who are really in earnest and desirous of advancing in God's service will find many an otherwise vacant interval, whether in the chapel or out of it, which may most profitably be devoted to mental prayer of an informal kind.

But what (and this was our second question)—what are we to think or meditate about, either at set times or at odd moments? The answer to this question will be different for every individual con-

cerned, and will be suggested by our own watchfulness; if only we can bring ourselves to be watchful after the right fashion. If only we are *on the look out* for something that may be of profit to ourselves individually, we shall find plenty to think about, either in our own private spiritual reading, or in what we hear publicly read in this chapel, or in the words that are addressed to us on Sunday mornings, or in some book of meditations, or again in the words of the prayers that we are accustomed daily or frequently to use. For regular and formal meditations, of course, it will ordinarily be best to have a book, unless when the "points" have been orally given (as in our Saturday meetings of the Sodality); but for shorter and less formal exercises of mental prayer we must fall back upon what Father Jerome Nadal calls the *reliquiæ cogitationis*, treasured reminiscences of what we have previously heard or read.

And if it be asked (to pass to our third question) *how* we are to meditate, one important item in the art of mental prayer has been already indicated; in as much as it is almost more than half the battle to select for ourselves, out of all that is set before us, the topics which are most suitable for our consideration. When you go into Lewis's in Manchester or Liverpool, or into Whiteley's in London, or even into one of our local emporia at Woodfields or Hurst Green, you do not forthwith proceed to purchase everything that is in the shop, but you look about for something that will suit you. So, too, we must not expect that everything in every religious book which we may take up, or in every sermon that we

hear, will meet some special need of our own. But we must be ready to believe that in a well-chosen book or in a carefully prepared sermon there is at least something that can be turned to good account for our own profit, something that we can usefully turn over in our minds. And having discovered this something, the business of meditation is simply to dwell on the truth that we find, or have heard, expressed, to apply it to ourselves, to ask ourselves how far we act in accordance with it, to consider the motives that should urge us so to act, the obstacles that are to be overcome, the means or resolutions that should be taken, and so forth. And all this process of consideration should be accompanied or seasoned with prayer, with petitions for light and guidance, for strength and courage and perseverance, or with acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, and so forth, as the subject in hand may suggest. The art of meditation is one that must be acquired by practice; and it is one that, with a little practice, will be found not too difficult as well as extremely profitable.

For instance, suppose that you wanted to make a meditation on what you have heard this morning. Here are some of the points. First point: Temptation. Sooner or later I shall have to meet it in some form or other, and the less I prepare for it the more sure I am to be assailed; therefore it is wise to set myself to the task of self-preparation. Help me, O Lord, to do this. Second point: How am I to do it? By making the truths of religion my own, instead of merely reading about them or listening

to others talking about them; and this can only be done by meditation in some form or other. Teach me, O Lord, to meditate. Third point: Application. Am I doing anything at all in this line? What can I do? What ought I to do? What shall I do? I will make our Lady my model, who "kept these things, pondering them in her heart." * She will help me.

* St Luke ii. 19, 51.

XX.

THE JUDGMENT TO COME*

"And the Lord said: Who, thinkest thou, is the wise and faithful steward, whom his lord setteth over his household, to give them their measure of wheat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing."—ST LUKE xii. 42, 43.

ST JOSEPH, whose feast we keep to-day, is, as we all know, in a special manner, the patron of the Christian deathbed; and we may well invoke his intercession on behalf of the meditation which we are going to make this morning on the subject of death, or rather of death and judgment.

Death may be considered under various aspects, from various points of view. To-day we will think of it as the moment of our first meeting with Jesus, our Lord and Master, our Sovereign and our Judge. Towards that meeting we are all hastening forward, whether we like it or no, whether we think of it or not, as surely as the hands of the clock are moving round to the hour, or the train rushing towards its terminus. He is at the term of our journey, awaiting us; and we shall have to stand before Him, face

* March 19, 1905 (second Sunday in Lent: Feast of St Joseph).

to face, and alone. Everything will turn on how we stand with Him. No one else will then matter at all. Our parents, relatives, and friends on earth will be able to do nothing for us then, so far as the determination of our ultimate destiny is concerned. Not one of them will stand beside us at that dread hour. Nay, even our patron saints, our Angel guardian, Mary herself, will be powerless to alter our doom. By the nature of that lone meeting of the soul with its Creator, all will be determined, determined without appeal, determined for eternity.

At that meeting we shall be called to an account for our stewardship; and, lest we should delude ourselves by a flattering comparison between ourselves and others, we must remember that the greater the gifts which have been bestowed upon us, the greater our knowledge, the keener our insight, the stricter will be the account which we shall be called upon to render. One of the points which strikes us most forcibly when we consider what little is told us in the Gospels about the life of St Joseph, is the heavy weight of the responsibility that was laid upon him. He was indeed "the wise and faithful steward whom his Lord placed over His household," that he might minister to all their temporal needs. To him, as we know, was entrusted the care of the Saviour of the world in His infancy and boyhood, and of His ever-blessed Mother. It was his to guard the Mother and the Son during those inhospitable days at Bethlehem, in the sudden peril which necessitated the flight into Egypt, during the sojourn of the Holy Family there, and again on the return journey, and through many

years at Nazareth. Whether he knew the whole truth concerning our Lord's divine nature, we are not told; but at least he knew that the charge laid upon him was that of the most precious things on earth.

Now to each one of us is entrusted a charge which differs in degree rather than in kind from that which was laid on St Joseph; the charge of our own body and soul, with all their senses and faculties. Body and soul belong to our Lord by every right and title; both have been hallowed by Him; both are united with Him through the mystery of the Incarnation, through the instrumentality of the sacraments, and through the operation of His sanctifying grace, by a bond far closer and more vital than that which connects our own hand or foot with our head and heart, or one limb with another. Of this St Paul again and again reminds us. "Know you not," he says, "that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." *

Such is the sacred charge which has been committed to us. And in a greater or less degree we shall all of us have, sooner or later, some charge of others, some responsibility for them; or rather every one of us is already burdened with some measure of responsibility for our brethren, in so far as we are capable of influencing them, and do, in fact, exert an influence over them, whether for good or for evil. Nor does our liability to be called to account stop here. It is the plain and simple truth that every-

* 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

thing that we possess has been entrusted to us for a purpose, and not given to us to do as we like with; and that at our death we shall be questioned as to everything, without exception, that has been so entrusted to us. The servant is appointed steward, not that he may turn his master's goods to his own profit, but that he may distribute them according to his master's appointment to the members of the master's household — *ut det illis in tempore tritici mensuram.*

But after all "responsibility" is rather a long word; and "the sense of responsibility" is a phrase rather too cumbersome, perhaps, to be fully taken in by the mind of a small boy. So let us try to put the matter in a simpler form. We are "responsible" for things which we have to answer for, and for which we shall be called to account. Suppose a man were to give his servant ten shillings, and tell him to go to Clitheroe and buy this, that, and the other for him, and bring him back the goods and the change. And suppose that instead of doing as he was told, he were to go off and have "a good time" at Whitewell. Well, you know, there would be enquiries, and very lame explanations, and a bad time generally, when he returned. Just imagine the master asking him: "What did you go to Whitewell for? I didn't give you the money for that!" And if he were to answer: "Oh, well, you see, I didn't 'feel like' going to Clitheroe, and shopping, and I did 'feel like' going to Whitewell." The master would presumably say things which the servant would not "feel like" listening to.

And now let us apply the parable; always remembering, however, that God in His mercy will not condemn any man to everlasting punishment except for the breach of some grave precept. But there are pains and penalties short of everlasting punishment; and even when there has been no sin, there may yet be the loss of degrees of merit and of reward that were within our reach, and which it is the height of folly to miss. We shall, then, in that last supreme hour, be asked—and there will be no possibility of eluding the question—What have you done with your time? What have you done with your money?—our pocket-money at school, the income which we shall derive from our profession or inheritance, our "pile" when we have heaped it up. And again: To what purpose have you used your senses—sight and hearing, and the rest, and your faculties—memory, imagination, understanding, will? Have you employed them in God's service? Or have you aimed simply at pleasing yourself? What has been your chief end in life? To have a good time? To be comfortable and take things easy? Or have you turned all to the best account, striving earnestly not only to avoid evil but to do good, to the very utmost extent of your ability? And then, what of your companions, or of those over whom you may have been placed, in whatever capacity? Have you, by your example, your conversation, your influence, helped *them* to serve God? Or have you allowed yourself to be hindered in your own service of God by the fear of what others would say, by the dread of public opinion, by what is called human respect?

Or, worse still, have you perchance abused your opportunities and your influence to draw them away from God's service? Have you been a traitor in the camp of God's Church by becoming an occasion of sin to them, and by helping, perhaps, to ruin them for life? These are hard words; but it is better that we should listen to hard words now, than that we should hear them from the lips of our Supreme Judge when it is too late. And they are not exaggerated words. It is no unheard-of thing that men who have had all the advantages of education in a Catholic school should afterwards, as the saying is, "go to the bad"; and when a man, under such circumstances, does "go to the bad," the beginnings of the evil may not unfrequently be traced back to misconduct, or evil conversation, into which he was, perhaps, led by others at school.

Do not forget, then, the possibility, even though it be but a possibility, that our first meeting with our Lord may be beyond description awful and terrible. Do not forget that it is possible for the servant who has been entrusted with his master's goods to say to himself, in the words of the parable: "My lord is long a-coming," and in this false security to give the reins to his evil desires, and to maltreat his fellow-servants either by harshness or (which is worse) by gratifying his passions at their expense, until at last the Lord comes at an hour when he little expects it, and appoints his portion with the souls of them that are lost for ever. Will it indeed be so with us? Can it be that some of us will have to face an angry Judge? Will our accusing conscience tell us that we have

rejected His graces, abused His gifts, and turned them against the Giver, wasted our substance, indulged our passions or our pride, or both, and perhaps involved others also in our ruin? Shall we find those futile and foolish excuses for sin, with which we tried to delude ourselves here on earth, dying away on our lips as we confront the awful majesty and the all-seeing eye of Him whose vigilance nothing can escape? Shall we discover, alas, too late, that we have been found out, that our every syllable has been overheard, every shameful action witnessed, every sinful thought read and registered against us? Shall we wake up from the dream of life to find that our contrition has been but half-hearted, our purposes of amendment a sham, the sacraments we have received unavailing or worse than unavailing? Will our meeting with Jesus be such as this? Alas, it is possible. O dear St Joseph, intercede for us that it may not be so.

And that it may not be so, it is well that we should be warned in time, and that, with our eyes fixed upon the goal towards which we are hastening, we should learn betimes, in the words of our daily examination of conscience, to "judge ourselves now with such a just severity" that then we may be judged "with mercy and clemency." If we would judge ourselves, says St Paul, we should escape the judgment of God, or rather, we should come safely through it.* If we would take a strict account of ourselves, and cultivate the sense of our responsibility to God for all our thoughts, words, and actions, for all our faculties,

*. 1 Cor. xi. 31.

senses, and possessions, then we should have less reason to fear that our accounts will not balance when they are exposed to that final scrutiny on which all depends. And remember that this scrutiny will reach back to the days of our boyhood, and will not be confined to the later periods of our life. We may have long since forgotten the incidents of our time at Stonyhurst. But all is recorded in God's books, both for us and against us. This is not an exaggeration but, as was said just now, the plain and simple truth, so far as the truth can be expressed in terms of human language. But it is a truth which we do not like to remember or to keep in mind, because the remembrance of it is apt to make us feel uncomfortable, and we resent being made uncomfortable. We are like men who travel in cold climates when the whole face of the country is covered with snow. Under stress of exhaustion, they become so benumbed with the cold that they feel an overpowering desire to give up the effort to advance, and to lie down and sleep. And yet to sleep would be fatal to them ; and to rouse them from their dangerous torpor, however painful the process may be, is the greatest kindness that any one can do them. Even so it is with us in our pilgrimage through life. Again and again we need to be roused into wakefulness, lest we too should be seized with a spiritual torpor, lest we should sink into oblivion of our own best and eternal interests.

But is not this to hold out a dismal prospect or fore-view of life? Will it not be extremely irksome to keep so constant a guard, to exact so strict an account of ourselves? Well, of course, if we have

not learned to do so already, it will undoubtedly be difficult just at first. With a little perseverance, however, it will not only become comparatively easy, but the consciousness of the effort which it will entail, and of the victory over self which it will ensure, will give us a sense of peace, of support, of confidence in God, which no one who has not experienced it can understand.

XXI.

SINCERITY IN PRAYER: ZEAL FOR GOD'S KINGDOM*

"Thus shall you pray: . . . Thy Kingdom come."—ST MATT. vi. 9, 10.

IF it be true—as it is—that we naturally dislike a selfish man for his selfishness, it is no less true that we are all naturally inclined to despise an insincere man for his insincerity. And we should all of us resent the imputation of being insincere ourselves. Nevertheless it is possible that we may have reason to ask ourselves whether, in one department of our lives, we are quite as sincere as we perhaps too easily assume ourselves to be; to wit, in our relations with God. And yet this is just the department in which, above all others, it is important that we should be sincere. For, whereas we can often deceive our neighbours, and even ourselves, we cannot deceive God; and the results—whether positive or negative—of any insincerity in our dealings with God will be eternal.

By an insincere man we understand, among other things, a man who does not mean what he says, or, to put the matter the other way about, who has the

* March 26, 1905 (third Sunday in Lent).

habit of saying what he does not mean; so that, sooner or later, his actions are found to belie his words. And we are, to a greater or less extent, insincere towards God when in our prayers we say what we do not mean, or—again to turn the statement round—when our deliberate actions would seem to show that, in our prayers, we do not really mean what we say, or that at best we mean it only after some transient and superficial fashion.

And yet, though the word "insincerity" has been used, in order the more forcibly to draw our attention to the matter, let us hasten to substitute for it the term "inconsistency." For after all, please God, we are not really insincere when we pray; but we are thoughtless, we are weak, we are fickle and wayward, and all these things lead to inconsistency between the words which we address to God and our conduct when we are not consciously thinking of God's presence. Nevertheless, though inconsistency is not so bad as insincerity, it is clearly not a desirable element in a man's character; and as we grow from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, it is worth our while to make serious efforts more thoroughly to square our actions with our words—with the solemn words of our prayers.

And lest the difficulty should be raised that the prayers which we say are not, for the most part, of our own composing, and that we cannot reasonably be expected to adopt the sentiments of other people, we will for the present take into consideration one prayer alone, viz., the one which was given us by Jesus Christ Himself, "The Lord's Prayer," as it is

called, or the "Our Father." This is plainly and unquestionably a prayer which every Christian ought to be able to recite with sincerity. So much, it may be assumed, none of us will care to dispute.

It is then a very practical question, and one which we may very usefully ask ourselves: Am I thoroughly in earnest when I say the "Our Father"? Do I really mean, in my own mind and heart, what the words express? Are my ordinary actions in accordance with my words? Or do I—at least to some extent—contradict, in my conduct, what I say with my lips? These questions concern more particularly the first part of the prayer; because the second part, beginning with: "Give us this day our daily bread," is comparatively easy; and at any rate we need not concern ourselves with it just at present. But consider the first three petitions: "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How much do these words really mean for us? How much do we really care for the hallowing of God's name, for the coming of His kingdom? And how far are we serious when we say: "Thy will be done"?

Some one among us might say, perhaps: "Well, I really never gave the matter a thought." For indeed, as has been said, we can be very thoughtless, even in our prayers, or perhaps most of all in our prayers. And yet the matter is at least worth thinking about. So let us face the question. And for the present we may confine our attention to the second of the three petitions: "Thy kingdom come," which is, as some of us may remember, the special motto of an association

to which most of us belong, the Apostleship of Prayer. Let us ask ourselves, then: Of what sort is our zeal for God's kingdom? We *say:* "Thy kingdom come"; but to what extent do we make any serious effort to bring about that which we profess to wish for?

The objector, however, may say again (interrupting, as objectors will): "Now that you force me to think about it, I do not know that I have made any serious effort of the kind. But why should I? What have I to do with the active politics—so to speak—of the kingdom of God? I am not a monk or a priest; and I have not the slightest intention of being either. That is their business, and I am quite content to leave it to them." This is, of course, putting the case in an extreme form; for there is not, in fact, anyone among us who does not bear some part, by his prayers and his alms, in the work of the Church. But the very crudeness of the objection may serve to make the answer more clearly reasonable. And the answer may be suggested by another question. If we were really indifferent about the interests of God's kingdom on earth—if we really did not care about God's kingdom at all, or not very much, should we be quite genuinely and thoroughly in earnest when we say the "Our Father"? Or should we be content to be only half in earnest when we do say it? No one, it may be assumed, would venture to answer: "Yes," to either of these queries. And, this being so, it should be a sufficient reply to the objection to say: "We *ought* to care—and to care very much—about the kingdom of God, because our

Lord, who wishes us well, and who knows best what is good for us, has bidden us to care about it, by the very fact that He puts this petition into our mouths."

But we may go further than this, and show why the advance of the kingdom of God upon earth ought to be a matter of interest for us all, laymen who intend to remain laymen as well as prospective priests. We should desire the advance of God's kingdom in the first place, because it were unworthy of us, as men and as Christians, to be selfish in our wishes and desires. When we read of the awful horrors of a great war, of 50,000 wounded and dying men lying on railway trucks in open sheds, with barely a few score of doctors and nurses to wait on them, we should be heartless indeed if we did not desire that the war may be speedily brought to a close, and the carnage ended by a peace honourable to both sides. Yet we know that sin and the loss or lack of the Christian faith are evils far worse than all the horrors of war; because, whereas the sufferings of this life, however terrible, are over in a brief space, and are often a boon in disguise in so far as they help to turn the heart of the sufferer to God, the consequences of sin (unless it be repented of) are everlasting and irremediable. And, therefore, it ought to be our most earnest and heartfelt wish that—so far as may depend on our prayers, our example, and our efforts of whatever kind—men may be preserved from sin, and brought more and more under obedience to the law of Christ.

Or, if it should happen that we are quite impervious to unselfish considerations, then at least we shall do

well to be reasonable in our selfishness. We have our own eternal interests to look to. And one of the means at our disposal for furthering our own eternal interests is to concern ourselves about the eternal interests of others besides ourselves. God does not forget those who are zealous for Him, and who have a care of the brethren for His sake.

There is, moreover, another consideration which those of us may take into account who are old enough to think about such matters. The practical realisation of the kingdom of God upon earth lies in the obedience of mankind to the commandments of God. And it is unquestionably the case that the true way even to temporal prosperity, for whole populations no less than for individual men, lies through the observance of God's commandments as interpreted by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. The words: "Seek ye, first, the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you," * are true in the first instance of society at large. And it only requires a little knowledge of what is going on in the world around us to see that the prosperity of whole nations—our own included—is gravely threatened by the growth and spread of that materialistic selfishness, that craving for pleasure and comfort, and amusement and excitement, which is the sure outcome of forgetfulness of God and neglect of His law. That this is so has been very clearly perceived by distinguished men who not only are not priests but are not even Catholics; men like Sir James Stephen in the last

* St Matt. vi. 23.

generation and President Roosevelt in our own. Between a materialistic selfishness—otherwise known as hedonism—and the loyal service of God, between living for self and living for God, there is, in effect, no logical mean. And a universal and unchecked selfishness leads, in the long run, to the moral and material ruin of any people among whom it prevails. If, then, we recognise patriotism as a worthy and noble sentiment or disposition; if we are concerned for the true welfare of our own country and countrymen; then we shall do well to cultivate a genuine zeal for that kingdom whose maintenance is the condition of stability and prosperity for all earthly kingdoms—the kingdom of God; such a zeal as will enable us to say with most heartfelt sincerity: "Thy kingdom come."

But considerations such as these are, perhaps, beyond the reach of most of us; and for the majority it may, after all, be better to fall back upon a simple act of faith in our Lord's divine goodness and wisdom. He asks us to pray for the maintenance and spread of His kingdom; and we ought at least to have sense enough to recognise that this is something more important, more worthy of our desires, than the paltry temporal favours which we desire for our own immediate convenience. The very fact that our Lord does ask us to pray for the coming of His kingdom is a sufficient guarantee that it is not useless to pray for it; and if we will but make the petition with a serious intention, instead of merely gabbling the words with our lips, the conviction will at last come home to us that we—weak

and insignificant as we are—are called upon to bear our part in a great and noble work, a work that is worthy of our manhood, and well calculated to tax our most strenuous efforts.

And yet, though it is an excellent thing to repeat the petition again and again, pondering in our hearts while we say with our lips the words: "Thy kingdom come"; we must not content ourselves with merely thinking about them; but, if we are really sincere, we must proceed to action.

And something of a test of our consistency and seriousness in this matter may be found in our practice of almsgiving, and, in particular, in our contributions for such purposes as those of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and the Protection and Rescue Society. Here is a means, ready to our hand, by which we may, at some little sacrifice of our own convenience, help forward the kingdom of God upon earth, by which we may co-operate in the great and world-wide work of bringing the Gospel home to those who are yet in the outer darkness, and of providing a Christian education and a good start in life for the orphans and destitute children of our own great towns. I say, at some little sacrifice of our own convenience, for that is a poor notion of charity which the school child had who said: "Please, sir, charity is giving away what you don't want." A strong and vigorous charity is not content with such niggardly measure as this; and such a measure would plainly afford no guarantee of our sincerity when we say, at the outset of our daily prayers: "Thy kingdom come."

XXII.

SINCERITY IN PRAYER: GOD'S WILL OUR RULE*

"And Jesus said" to the chief priests and ancients of the people: "What think you? A certain man had two sons; and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said: I go, Sir; and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him: The first. Jesus said to them: Amen, I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you."—ST MATT. xxi. 28-31.

THE subject of sincerity in prayer, or of the consistency of our actions with our prayers, is one that deserves more than a passing thought; and we may profitably return to the question: Do we really mean what we say when we recite the "Our Father"? And having already considered together the second petition of that prayer: "Thy kingdom come," we will now turn our attention more particularly to the words which immediately follow: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We say every day, and several times a day: "Thy will be done." And we see clearly enough that this

* April 2, 1905 (fourth Sunday in Lent).

petition contains the very gist and substance of the first part of the Lord's Prayer. We *say:* "Thy will be done." Do we mean what we say? The dullest of us all can understand that the test of sincerity, or, let us say, of consistency as contrasted with fickle waywardness, is to be found in action. The son who, when his father bade him go and work in his vineyard, said: "I go, Sir," but "went not," was on the most charitable hypothesis a very fickle person. Either he did not mean what he said when he told his father that he would go, or else he very quickly changed his mind. And we, when we say: "Thy will be done," and immediately afterwards do many things which we know to be contrary to God's will, only too faithfully resemble one who is certainly not held up for our admiration or imitation. It may be taken for granted, as was said in our last conference, that we are not consciously insincere. Please God, we do not say our prayers with our tongue in our cheek (as the saying goes), deliberately pronouncing with our lips words with which we have no intention of squaring our actions. No; it is to be hoped that we are not quite so bad as that, and that—at the worst—we are only fickle and thoughtless. Either we change our minds very rapidly; or we do not give ourselves the trouble of meaning anything at all when we pray.

But this, after all, is bad enough; and the very purpose of education—as distinct from mere instruction—is to cure us of our thoughtlessness and waywardness; to train us to *think* of what we say, and to *mean* what we say, and not to change our minds as

the pointer of a weathercock changes its direction with every gust of wind. A school, and most of all a Catholic school, is an institution which aims at turning out men, not weathercocks; men who can will straight and will strongly. And the only way in which we can will both straight and strongly is by acquiring the habit of willing what God wills. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." A whole treatise on education is summed up in these words.

Now an ounce of example may sometimes be worth a ton of theory; and in this connection we have an example ready to hand. We are all familiar with the life and letters of that distinguished American missioner, Father William Judge, S.J.* His was a personality such as can hardly fail to appeal to those who, having life with its opportunities yet before them, are minded to make the best use of those opportunities. Courage, enterprise, endurance, cheerfulness under difficulties and dangers and extreme hardships, a tender consideration for others, and a readiness to go all lengths in self-sacrifice, all these characteristics went to the making of one who was indeed a hero in the best sense of the word. And what was the leading principle of his life, the key to all his conduct, the keynote of all his utterances? Was it not this very conformity to the will of God which we are now considering; that same conformity which

* See the extremely interesting and stimulating biography of Father Judge, chiefly made up of his own letters from Alaska and the Klondike, entitled *An American Missionary* (Boston, 1905).

we all profess, but which so few of us practise except in the most elementary and tentative fashion? "I have had no end of causes of worry and vexation," he writes, at the very outset of his career of missionary activity, "but I know that no matter what happens, it is God's will that it should be so, and therefore I would not wish it to be otherwise on any account." And again, a little later: "Let us once for all resign ourselves into the hands of our loving Father, and take care never to desire anything but what He pleases to ordain, both for ourselves and for our friends, and for all, and in all things." And five years afterwards, when extreme and exhausting toil had already prematurely aged him, and brought him near to his goal, he writes again: "I think there is nothing sweeter or more soothing to the soul than an ardent desire that God's holy will may be accomplished in us."

Here was a man who had said the "Our Father" to some purpose. Here was a man to whom the words: "Thy will be done" were no mere conventional phrase to be gabbled over with the lips, but the expression of a living and working principle which cheered him and supported him through the severest trials, and turned these very trials themselves into a cause of joy and thankfulness. Here was a man whose conformity with God's will was no mere passive acceptance of trials when they came, but who made it his business throughout his life to do, with all his strength, and at whatever cost to himself, what he believed to be most pleasing to his Divine Master.

And now as for ourselves, how are we going to give effect, in action and conduct, to that desire which we so often express that God's will may be done, or —as we phrase it in our prayers at the "Stations of the Cross"—that it may be "our delight to do in all things Thy most holy will"? How are we to know what *is* God's will? We know it, first of all, by the Commandments. We know very well indeed that it is not God's will that we should commit sin by transgressing any of these in thought, word, or action. And we also know perfectly well that it is not God's will that we should put ourselves in the dangerous occasions of sin; or that we should deliberately think about things, or speak of things, or do things, which lead us in the direction of sin, and by weakening our character will expose us to temptation.

But there are many things apart from sin and occasions of sin in which, if we will only give ourselves the trouble of thinking a little, we may see God's will clearly enough. There are plenty of things which it is not precisely sinful to do, but which it is plainly meritorious to avoid, and which it is therefore God's will that, as far as possible, we should avoid. Take, for instance, such a matter as rude and unmannerly behaviour. It would certainly not be safe to condemn all such behaviour as sinful; for young boys at any rate have not always the sense to see that it may easily involve a breach of charity. But it is obviously not what God wills; and its avoidance is assuredly meritorious in His sight. Our Lord Himself has said: "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you"; and as we

should not like others to be rude and unmannerly towards us, it cannot be in accordance with His will that we should be rude and unmannerly towards them. A man does not lose his right to be treated with reasonable respect and consideration merely because he happens to be placed in authority over us.

Or take, yet again, our observance—or, on the other hand, our neglect—of the ordinary rules of school life. We all know that to break a rule is not, in itself, a sin. And yet it can hardly be doubted that, on the whole, God wishes us to observe the regulations of the house in which we live, just as—on the whole—He wishes us, in later life, to observe the laws of our country. And therefore, though it is not a sin to break a rule as such, it is certainly meritorious, and therefore pleasing to God (or rather, it is pleasing to God, and therefore meritorious) to keep college rules for His sake; to study at the appointed times, to learn the lessons which are assigned us, and so forth. St Paul would have servants to be obedient to their masters, not because they will be punished for disobeying them, but, in his own words: "Be obedient to your masters . . . as to Christ; not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men," *i.e.*, as though it were your purpose to please them alone, "but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, knowing that we shall receive from the Lord the reward of inheritance."* And what he said to servants we may be sure he would have said to schoolboys; for the principle involved is the same.

* Eph. vi. 5, 6; Col. iii. 23.

And now in conclusion let us turn to the example, not of a mere human missionary, but of the Divine Master whom he served. Our Lord, in His agony in the Garden, prayed, as we all know, in words such as these: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me: nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." And these words supply what may be called an authentic commentary on the petition of the "Our Father" which we have been considering. It seems easy enough to say, and after a fashion to mean: "Thy will be done." It is less easy to say: "Not my will, O Lord, but Thine." And yet it will happen again and again that in order to do God's will we must give up our own natural inclinations. And in fact it is the readiness to give up our own inclinations which is the best measure of our readiness to do God's will. But, indeed, if we reflect on the matter at all seriously we shall see without difficulty how reasonable it is that our inclinations should give way to God's will. In external affairs, where the well-being or even the convenience of other people is concerned, we constantly have to forge our own preferences for the sake of the common good, or of what the majority consider to be the common good. But whereas even the common good in the ordinary affairs of daily life is relatively a small matter, and whereas majorities may very easily be mistaken, God's will is never a small matter, and God makes no mistakes.

If, then, in the past, we have been so foolish as to think lightly of that will of God the fulfilment of which we daily profess to desire, we shall, if we are

wise, imitate that first son in the parable, who, having at the outset refused to obey his father's behest, afterwards repented, and betook himself to the task which had been set him. Whatever our condition in life may be, our Lord has work for us all in His vineyard. And remember that His vineyard is here, no less than in the world outside; and that our working-time has already begun. He says to us: "Son, go work *to-day* in my vineyard." It is most particularly by diligence in our appointed work day by day that we shall give proof of the sincerity with which we daily pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

XXIII.

OUR DESTITUTE CHILDREN: A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY*

"And Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me."—ST JOHN xviii. 35.

WE are to consider, just now, a subject which always engages our thoughts during the holy season of Lent, and which is indeed deserving of all the attention which we can give to it. And we may begin by recalling to mind a short but striking chapter of modern social history. Most of us, no doubt, have heard, and all of us ought to know at least something, of Dr Barnardo, and of the great work which he has been carrying on during the last thirty-nine years on behalf of destitute children.† Dr Barnardo is not a Catholic, but he has set an example from which Catholics need not be ashamed to learn—and indeed have learned—a very practical lesson. Ever since the year 1866, when he began life as a medical student in the London hospital, Dr Barnardo has made it his business to provide for the needs,

* April 9, 1905 (Passion Sunday).

† Since these words were written, the death of Dr Barnardo has given occasion to the warmest eulogies on the part of Catholic no less than of non-Catholic writers.

material and educational, of the "waifs" or neglected children of the great towns and cities of England. He was, indeed, the pioneer of what is known as "Rescue" work. He began, of course, as all pioneers begin, on a very small scale; but the number of children who, down to the present time, have passed through the various "Homes" and other such institutions which he has founded, and which he still directs, reaches a total of about 50,000. Of these, some 15,000 have been emigrated to Canada and given a good start there; and only the other day a party of 350 sailed, the first instalment of 1500 whom he intends to send out in the course of this one year, 1905.

Now, in the earlier days of Dr Barnardo's work, or rather, when he had already been engaged in it during some twenty years, it became known that he had in his various institutions a considerable number of Catholic children, or children of Catholic parents, who, of course, were not being brought up as Catholics. This circumstance led to more than one lawsuit, the purpose of which, on the Catholic side, was to regain for the parents the custody of certain of these Catholic children. But this course of procedure could not go on indefinitely. It was costly and tedious; and moreover, it drew from Dr Barnardo the stinging retort, repeated in sundry pamphlets and letters to the newspapers: "Why don't you Roman Catholics provide for your own waifs? Or, if you cannot or will not do so, what sort of charity or zeal is it that makes you try to hinder me from providing for them?"

Now, it is not to be supposed that Catholics in England had no orphanages or charitable institutions till this difficulty arose with Dr Barnardo. On the contrary, in spite of his taunts, we had done much more for our poor in proportion to our means than any non-Catholic body in the country. But the difficulty with Dr Barnardo served to draw attention to the inadequacy for our needs of the institutions which we had; and so deeply impressed was the late Cardinal Manning with the absolute need of making good the deficiency, that he gave a solemn undertaking to the effect that, at least so far as his own diocese was concerned, no single destitute Catholic child should be left unprovided for—an undertaking which was no less solemnly repeated by his successor, Cardinal Vaughan, in 1891. And in response to these promises, Dr Barnardo, on his side, undertook to hand over any Catholic child who might come under his care on receipt of a written guarantee that that child should be placed in a Catholic institution. As a simple matter of fact and of figures, he did, in the year 1903, hand over no less than 124 such children.

To Dr Barnardo, then, it may fairly be said that we owe, indirectly at least, the organisation of Catholic Rescue work, on a large and comprehensive scale, at least in the diocese of Westminster. The same work, as we know, has been taken up in other dioceses also; notably in Southwark, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Salford. And we know, moreover, and are proud to know, that in Liverpool and Salford the work is very largely in the hands of two former students of this college.

If in what follows I speak rather of Westminster than of our own neighbourhood, the reason is that in the case of the former fuller statistics are available. The lesson which they teach is, moreover, the same, whether the particulars be drawn from the north or from the south. It was comparatively easy to declare, as Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Vaughan declared, that our Catholic destitute children should be provided for; it was not so easy to provide for them. It was comparatively easy to hand over to Father Douglas and Father Bans the duty of making this provision; it was not so easy for Father Douglas and Father Bans to carry out the task imposed upon them. And in fact it has been impossible to carry it out as fully as would have been desirable. Twelve months ago there were about 800 children of all ages in the various Homes belonging to the diocese of Westminster. If all the deserving applications could have been met, there would have been at least 1000. The annual cost of maintaining 800 children, at the rate of £16 per child, amounts to nearly £13,000.* Such, then, is the income which, as Father Bans assures us in his Report, the "Rescue Crusade" would require in the diocese of Westminster alone, even if the numbers were only to be kept up to their present level; and it is plain that (as the same writer insists) very much more will be needed if the Homes are to be so enlarged or multiplied as to meet the actual needs of the day, and to keep pace with those

* The actual cost of maintenance of a child is about £13 per annum; but allowance has to be made for various contingent expenses.

of an ever-growing population, and with those which are imposed by the ever-increasing exigencies of the Board of Education.

Unfortunately, instead of any prospect of an extension of the work, the Reports of the Westminster Rescue Crusade, as it is called, show an alarmingly increasing deficit. Nor is this due to any merely temporary crisis, but to a falling off in the ordinary means of support. The figures which follow are given on the authority of Father Bans himself; and the facts are as painful to record as they are plain to understand. In the year 1903 the required sum of £13,000 was, by a special effort, actually raised. But in 1904 the subscriptions fell to £10,500, leaving a deficit of £2500 for that single year alone. Adding this to a previous deficit £3500 already incurred, the total amount of indebtedness is £6000; so that in this present year the manager needs no less than £19,000 if the debt is to be cleared and the year's expenses met. The alternative will be the closing of some of the Homes, or a large reduction in the number of their inmates.*

I will now quote a rather long passage from the Report from which the foregoing figures are taken. It is the most eloquent and moving statement of the case for Rescue work which I have ever read; and if the state of things in Manchester and Liverpool is not quite so bad as in London, which Father Bans

* It will be understood that these facts and figures are given only by way of specimen. They could be paralleled, perhaps on a smaller scale, from the records of Rescue work in other dioceses.

has chiefly in view, the difference is only in degree, not in kind. He writes:—

"A great awakening is taking place among the people [of England]. The sense of public duty to the poor and the oppressed is forcing those in authority, however reluctantly, to face their responsibility. The outcast poor have become a national peril. A note of alarm is sounded on every side. The crushed and seething multitude, homeless and hopeless, drink-sodden, crime-stained, huddled and hustled into the dark and squalid dens of the city . . . has become an appalling army whose very breath threatens to lay waste the land. They can no longer be superciliously ignored or set aside. . . . Paltry palliatives are in vain. The penurious distribution of peddling alms is as effective as it would be to plaster up the fissures of Vesuvius. The remedy must be as large and deep and generous as the danger is multifold, far-reaching, and menacing. The gaunt army itself will perish—nothing can save it. . . . The only reparation [which our own generation can offer] is to save the children. Nor will that allow of tinkering half-measures. The country is alive to the vital importance of this question, and is looking to each section of the community to do its duty. . . . Motives of public expediency and humanity are directing the will of the nation to cope with these evils; and are we, as Catholics, to allow our neighbours to be more kindlier moved than we are, who claim the inspiration of Faith and the impulse of Christian Love to guide and strengthen us? Let it be written deep in the conscience of all

our readers that God has made us all the appointed custodians and foster-parents of these outcast orphans, that we are doubly and trebly pledged to fill up all the measure of a father's care and a mother's love to them. We are pledged by our Catholic profession. We are pledged to the country that protects us. We are solemnly and specifically pledged by the public utterances of two Archbishops in succession, speaking for themselves and on our behalf. . . . Think of it! Hundreds of children are coming in, and must come in; cannot, and must not be denied. Ranging in age from new-born infants to fifteen, some must be maintained for all the years until they can be safely sent out into the world alone. . . . The eye of faith sees in every one of them the face of Christ—the poor, wan, sickly, faint, and maybe disfigured face of Christ. Will you, dare you, turn them away? Dare you meet that face again in after years, grown old, defaced, dishonoured, and outraged, because of the neglect, to-day, of a golden, Christ-sent opportunity? No idle pity or futile sentiment is called for, but practical help. . . . What a mockery it is to see these starving multitudes in a Christian land! . . . Thousands of children are being flung to the wolves"—that is to say, abandoned to those temptations which beset the steps of the destitute waif—"while men and women are wallowing in luxury and self-indulgence."

These are stronger words than I should have dared to use. They are, however, the words of no mere outsider, but of one who has not spared himself in the service of those for whom he pleads. And

now let us clearly understand the bearing of these words upon ourselves. I am not suggesting that we should all of us imitate the generosity of one of our schoolfellows, not now present, who—as I happen to know—for thirteen consecutive weeks had put the whole of his weekly pocket-money into one or other of the alms-boxes, till a paternal government, informed of the matter, judged it best to interpose, and put a kindly check on this self-denying munificence. And seeing that even if we were to give, on the average, as much as a penny per week during Lent, or sixpence apiece during the whole of Lent, our united efforts would barely suffice for the support of one child during a fraction of a year, it might seem as though it did not matter very much whether during this holy season we were to give a little more or a little less. But looking forward, as we ought to look forward, to our future lives, it will matter very much indeed whether or no, while we were still at school, we have or have not learned the lesson of our responsibilities; whether we have or have not taken in the truth that very considerable sacrifices will, in later years, be demanded of us if the faith of the children of our poorer and middle classes is to be preserved. For Rescue Societies represent, after all, only one branch or department of the great work of Catholic education in this country, to the imminent peril of which the Catholic public is, apparently, at last beginning to waken up. And it matters very much indeed whether in early youth we do or do not form a fixed and resolute determination to be generous, not only in a small way now, but on a

much larger scale hereafter; in the days when we shall be, in a measure, our own masters, and when the circumstances of our lives will no longer demand so considerable an expenditure (relatively speaking) on amusements and refreshments as seems to have become a kind of necessity for the modern schoolboy. And yet even here, at a season when the rival claims of charity and of amusement are apt to come into sharper conflict than usual, it may be well to remember that whereas we have our Lord's own promise that a cup of cold water given for His name's sake shall have its eternal reward, there is no such divine promise of an eternal reward to him who provides a cup for the winner—let us say—of a hurdle race.

But it is time to return to the text with which we started, and which has perhaps by this time been forgotten. Suppose that the Catholics of England were to fall short of what is demanded of them in this most necessary matter, and that it should prove impossible to receive into our orphanages and refuges some of those children who, if we do not receive them, will be taken in hand by non-Catholic agencies and robbed of their faith. And suppose that one of these children had sense enough and courage enough to remonstrate against this proceeding, what would be the answer of the authorities of that non-Catholic agency? It would be precisely that of Pilate to our Lord: "Behold thy own nation hath delivered thee up to me." God grant that this or something like this may never have to be said of the Catholics of England, to whom the faith has been handed down at so great a cost.

XXIV.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY OF THE HOLY CROSS*

"And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary."—ST JOHN xix. 17.

THE Way of the Cross, "the King's Highway of the Holy Cross," as à Kempis calls it—this is to be the subject of our meditation this evening. It is a subject well calculated to sober us; it is likewise a subject well calculated to hearten and encourage us. It is a subject the consideration of which should make us ashamed of our moral weakness and spiritual cowardice in the past; but should likewise stir us up to high aspirations, and help us to set before ourselves noble ideals for the future.

It was a wonderful thing that the Son of God should become Man for man's redemption. Still more wonderful must it seem, at first sight, that having determined to live and die as Man, He should have chosen such a life and such a death as we know Him to have lived and died. And yet we cannot but

* April 13, 1905 (Friday in Passion Week: Feast of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Preached in the Church of St Peter, Stonyhurst.

hold that His was a wise as well as a gracious choice—a choice intended for our instruction no less than for our redemption.

See Him, now, on His last journey. His back and all His sacred limbs have been torn by those scourges under whose cruel blows so many victims fell dead—*plumbatis caesi*, as the Roman Martyrology has it; His brow is encircled and His temples are pierced by that awful crown of thorns; He is weak with loss of blood; He is struggling along under the burden of His cross to the place where He is to be nailed to it, to die there in torment and in disgrace. And, in doing all this and enduring all this, He is tracing out the path which I too must tread if I would reach the goal which He has set before me. Steep is the path, and narrow is the way; but it is *His* way, "the King's Highway of the Holy Cross." He is my King, my Lord, my Model, my heart's love; and He bids me follow Him. He bids all of us follow Him, in our measure and degree. Our cross may be lighter or it may be heavier, but, if we would enter into life everlasting, some kind of cross we must all carry, and bear it faithfully to the end.

But I would speak this evening not alone of that bearing of the cross which is an indispensable condition of eternal salvation, of that modicum of self-denial which is necessary for the avoidance of grievous sin; but also and more especially of that generous embracing of the cross which is needed if a man is to attain to such a degree of Christian virtue as will raise him above the dull level of mere mediocrity. It is not well to be always thinking of sin and the

danger of sin; and, moreover, the best way to avoid the danger of evil-doing is, very often, to set our hearts on the doing of good.

Some kind of cross, as has been said, we must all carry; and, be it now added, happiest and most blessed are they for whom the burden is heaviest and the way steepest, provided only that they will keep facing upwards. For these are they who have the best chance of doing great things for God; and to do great things for God is the highest and noblest ambition which a man can cherish. And therefore, dear brethren, never omit to thank God with all your hearts as often as you feel the weight of the cross galling your shoulders; for then there is hope for you. Are you prostrate with some distressing malady, or even racked with pain? Thank God that you have been found worthy to endure some suffering which deserves the name. Are you smitten with sorrow? Have you met with some bitter disappointment? Have you been misunderstood, misrepresented, falsely accused, harshly or unjustly treated? Has your kindness been requited with ingratitude and contempt? Ah! then rejoice! Rejoice in the very centre of your soul, even while the flesh winces and the feelings are harrowed; for Jesus your King and Captain was treated so; and now you know that you are treading in His footsteps; you know that you have your feet securely planted on the firm though rugged surface of the King's highway.

And, to speak of less unwonted and less occasional experiences, happy are you who, being compelled by circumstances to labour for a livelihood,

have no time to be idle. Happy are you who, by reason of straitened means, have no opportunities, or but few, for foolish self-indulgence. For you, your work is your cross; your privations are your cross; the dull monotony of life, the lack of variety and change,—these things are your cross, cut out for you, weighed and measured for you, and fitted, as it were, to your shoulders. Happy are you; for, in your patience and perseverance under the petty trials and difficulties of daily life, you are doing, all unconsciously perhaps, our Lord's own work in the world; you are doing your part to keep humanity healthy, morally and spiritually healthy; you are holding up to us, your neighbours, the light of good example; you are helping to teach us the very lessons which Jesus taught during His hidden life at Nazareth.

It is no exaggeration to say that it is such as you, if you will but practise the virtues of your state and condition, that the world needs for its regeneration; for it was through the virtues of the poor that the Church won her peaceful victory over the mightiest empire that the world has seen; and it was the virtues of the poor which kept the Church sound at heart even in those dark and evil days when vice and ambition and worldliness were rampant in her high places.

Happy, then, are you who are, as it were by compulsion, poor. And yet, happier still is the man who, having wealth and comfort within his reach, having but to stretch forth his hand to grasp his full portion of worldly pleasure, is clear-sighted

enough to perceive that not for these things was man made, that not in the abundance of these things is true well-being in this world or salvation in the next to be found, but rather in their voluntary renunciation, whether total or partial. Happier the man who, while the broad and easy road of self-gratification lies invitingly open before him, has the strength of will to turn his back upon it, and to choose in preference the arduous and stony path which His Divine Master has trodden before him. More blessed is he who is man enough, of his own free choice,

"To scorn delights, and live laborious days,"

not that he may accumulate a fortune, or gain distinction for himself, or satisfy some natural taste and craving for knowledge, but that he may serve God, that he may make himself useful in the world, that he may lighten in some degree the crushing burdens which others have to bear. More blessed he who has the sense to understand that, if a plentiful measure of this world's goods has been put into his hands, it has been placed there in order that it may be used not for selfish but for unselfish ends; and that he is no more exempt than the toiler in the fields from the law of labour, of sacrifice, of effort, of endurance, as the inexorable condition of being a true and whole-hearted disciple of the Master who bore the cross that He might trace out for us all the true way of life.

Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde? Ut quid diligitis vanitatem, et quaeritis mendacium? "Ye

sons of men," asks the Psalmist, "how long will your hearts be heavy? Why do ye love vanity and seek after a lie?" The world will tell you, in the words of M. Renan's nineteenth-century Gospel: "Amen, amen I say to thee, young man, amuse thyself." The world, with siren voice, will sing in your ear the vain and foolish counsel of the old song: "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may." It *is* a vain and foolish counsel, and you know it. "Why will ye love vanity?" The world will say to you:

> "That age is best which is the first,
> When youth and blood are warmer;"

and will bid you fling away that first and best age in the delusive and self-defeating pursuit first of merely selfish and then of sinful delights. The world will tell you that it cannot be otherwise than thus in the days of a man's youth. It is a lie. That all young men do so. It is a lie. Will ye "seek after a lie"?

Very different from the false and flattering counsels of the world, which never yet did you a good turn, is the stern but salutary bidding of Him who bore the cross for you. If you have lain dead in your sins, He says to you, as He said to the widow's son when He called him back to life: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." * And to all of you who have life yet before you, I say in His name: Arise, in the strength of your manhood, men before your time, strong by the power of the crucified; lift up your hearts, and lift up your eyes, and look upon Him who has gone

* St Luke vii. 14.

before you to show you the way. If, like the sick man in the Gospel, you have lain long upon the couch of unmanly self-indulgence, I say to you in His name: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." * To lie helpless upon a couch in the day-time is a sign of weakness; to carry it is a proof of strength. This proof of strength He would have you to give. A couch is the appurtenance of sickness, and vicious inclinations are the appurtenance of sin. To yield to these inclinations is to lie upon the couch; manfully to overcome them is to carry the couch: and such is our Lord's abounding goodness that even when trials and temptations have come upon us as the result of our own past sins, He allows the patient endurance of them to be credited to our account as the carrying of a cross. Indeed His own cross was the hard bed whereon He was to die; and Jesus carrying His cross and the paralytic carrying his bed are closely related pictures in the gallery of Gospel subjects.

But, as I have said before, we wish to aim, please God, at something better than mere resistance to temptation, and the avoidance of grievous sin. It is no stolid race of "passive resisters" that this college aims at sending forth; but militant Catholics, pledged to the active service of their King at whatever cost to themselves; and well knowing that the cost will be in proportion to the service.

And now let us ask ourselves: What sort of preparation are we making—how are we training ourselves—or are we training ourselves at all—for a

* St John v. 8; *cf.* St Mark ii. 11.

life of self-denying service hereafter? For it were futile to flatter ourselves that if, throughout the years of our boyhood, we were to be consistently soft and self-indulgent, we should become models of the opposite virtues immediately on our leaving school. In this respect, as in others, the child is father to the man; and, as the sapling is bent, so will the tree grow.

In many points we are legitimately ambitious to emulate here the great non-Catholic public schools of England. But there is one particular in which it would be sad indeed if we resembled them. Some of you may be acquainted with the words in which a distinguished headmaster, speaking of English public schoolboys as a class, tells us that their expenditure on their own pleasure and enjoyment is characterised by lavish extravagance, while their alms, taken on the average, amount to no more than a beggarly pittance; that the takings of the tuck-shop are enormous, while the contents of the alms-box, which affords some measure of the self-denial practised in the school, suggest the "one poor halfpenny-worth of bread" which in Falstaff's dietary formed the accompaniment to a most "intolerable deal of sack." Here assuredly is an example which we need not feel ourselves called upon to emulate; and, God forbid that it should ever be possible to bring such an indictment against Catholic schoolboys, here or elsewhere.

And yet it would be foolish to shut our eyes to the danger lest, in this matter, we should, little by little, fall in with the fashion which, as we learn from so high an authority, prevails, or has until lately pre-

vailed, outside. And, lest we should fall in with that fashion, let us imagine those unfortunate non-Catholic public schoolboys, whom we, perhaps, are sometimes tempted to envy, summoned to the bar of God's justice, and addressed in words like these: "I was hungry and thirsty and naked. Your own appetites ye never stinted, and yourselves ye were careful to array in all the newest panoply and most approved accoutrements of sport; but Me ye fed not, nor clothed. I was a child, destitute and homeless; and you, comfortably housed and well cared for, and wanting for nothing that could gratify your every whim and fancy, turned Me adrift." Those youths might indeed, with some show of reason, excuse themselves by saying: "Lord, we knew no better. We never enjoyed the blessings of the Catholic Faith; the sacraments of Thy Church were withheld from us; Thy Gospel in its fulness was never preached to us; the King's way of the cross we never learned to tread; nor were we ever taught to hymn the praises of Mary, the Mother of Mercy."

Such, we may imagine, would be the answer which they would make to the Supreme Judge of all mankind. But we have enjoyed the advantages which they lack; and, were it ever to happen, which God forbid, that any of us should lay ourselves open to the like accusation, we, assuredly, could not allege excuses such as these. And yet, can it be, perchance, that something has been lacking even to you, students of this college, of the helps which you needed? It would be a terrible thing if, in the day of God's judgment, it should be said to one of us, your elders:

'I was hungry and thirsty, and naked and homeless; and, while others devotedly did their duty by these boys in the matter of secular instruction, and in all things relating to their temporal needs, you, who had some charge of their spiritual welfare, stood idly by, and though you saw many of them foolishly squander their money on self-indulgence, you never raised your voice, in real earnest, on behalf of My poor and My little ones; and the love of My poor, the lesson of self-denial, of constant and habitual and persevering self-denial on behalf of My poor—these things you have not taught them." From such a reproach, and from the awful curse which must merely follow such a reproach, may God in His mercy deliver us.

Woe, woe, woe to us, as educators of youth, if by word or example we were to inculcate on you, of whom we have some temporary charge, anything short of a downright hatred, detestation, loathing, contempt, and scorn of that spirit of worldliness which transforms Christian men into what St Paul calls "enemies of the Cross of Christ . . . whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame."* Woe to us if we did not with all our hearts despise, and to the utmost of our power teach you to despise, that paltry and frivolous view of life which obtains among so many of those whose wealth enables them to waste their manhood on the things of a child; that arrogant, self-conceited, self-centred self-delusion which beguiles the pampered favourite of fortune into conceiving of God's world as though it were forsooth, *his* playground; so that he would have it

* Philipp. iii. 18.

if he could, a globe girdled with golf-links for his amusement; circled with a motor race-track for his sport; furnished too with convenient oceans for his yachting, and mountains for his climbing, and rivers for his fishing, and forests for his shooting, and open country for his hunting, and—to omit the darker shades of the picture—plentifully provided with pavilions, at suitable intervals, for refreshments and —let us say—for the most up-to-date forms of indoor recreation; and inhabited by a limited population of persons whom he would regard as inferior beings whose appropriate and adequate occupation it should be to minister to his pleasures. Woe to us if we did not warn you, insistently and betimes, against the first beginnings of that insensate and insatiate craving for excitement and pleasure which in its former manifestations has brought about the decadence and the ruin of kingdoms and of empires in the past, and which is at this day sapping the vitals, undermining the prosperity, nay, menacing the very stability of the most powerful of modern nations. That this is so, men who are neither priests nor even Catholics, but philosophic publicists and hard-headed statesmen, have repeatedly declared in no ambiguous terms. And do not flatter yourselves that you will be able to cry "Halt!" whenever you choose, upon the downward path. The unrestrained gratification of the senses leads by all but inevitable steps to the unrestrained indulgence of the passions, and this means the ruin of homes and, on the larger scale, the very havoc of society.

But look at the matter from another point of view.

Why is it that our Catholic charities, even those which deal with our most urgent and fundamental public needs, are on every hand reduced to such dire straits, too often not only unable to extend their operations, but in imminent danger of being obliged to curtail and retrench them, for sheer lack of funds? It is not the widow's mite that is withheld from their support. I have no hesitation in saying that one great source of the evil lies in the worldliness of so many Catholic laymen of the educated classes. It is not so much that they refuse to give, as that they have never learned to interest themselves in such matters, or to care about them. It is that so many of them have so feeble a sense of their responsibilities, and are so blind to the possibilities that lie within their reach, if only they would think less of passing their leisure hours agreeably and expensively, and more of what they might do with their time and their means for the Kingdom of God.

And now I will put to you, boys and young men, this practical question:—Are there as many as a dozen among you all, or is there one, who, whatever his future profession or position in life may be, will embrace the cross; who will determine, according to the measure of his opportunities, to devote himself without stint and without reserve to the active service of his Lord and Master; who will make it his fixed principle to throw away no fraction of his means and to waste no fragment of his time on idle and profitless pleasure—by which I do not mean such reasonable relaxation as every man requires to keep himself in health and vigour; who

will resolve, even while he is here in this college, to spare no effort, however irksome and fatiguing, that will serve to fit him to work hereafter more efficiently for God; to work, work, work, till the night cometh wherein a man can work no more? If there be any such, he or they will do great things for our Lord. If there be any such, he or they will have discovered the secret of the best and highest kind of happiness which is attainable upon this earth.

Does this seem to you too lofty an ideal? Yet surely we must all of us have known Catholic lay-folk among both poor and rich who have faithfully lived up to it. And, moreover, rightly considered, such a scheme of life is in accordance with the dictates of the merest common-sense. It is, *mutatis mutandis*, what men habitually do from motives of frugal economy, for the sake of amassing a fortune, or of improving their position in the world. Look at the matter as though it were a purely commercial transaction, which, indeed, we have our Lord's authority for doing. Not even the most feather-headed of boys would be so silly as to give a shilling for an ounce of sweets if he knew that he could get a pound of a better sort of sweets for a penny. Now every shilling that you spend on useless pleasure purchases only a momentary or passing delight, whereas every act of self-denial, every effort in God's cause, every penny given in alms, has an everlasting reward. Which is the better investment?

Does it seem to you that too high a standard has

been put before you? It would not have seemed so to our ancestors. This college, thank God, enjoys the privilege of having sent forth, in the days of its exile, a score of martyrs who laid down their lives for the Faith; a goodly company of confessors who endured extreme hardships, and many of them imprisonment in foul dungeons, for the same holy cause; and a multitude of others who remained steadfastly faithful through a life-time of harassing persecution. And for all this we have their own word for it that they set themselves to make diligent preparation while they were still boys at school. They have left it in writing that their ambition was to become "virtuous men who [should] stand like firm bulwarks against the fury of heresy"; and this, be it remembered, when "the fury of heresy" was a very grim reality.

We have, thank God, no reason to be ashamed of our ancestry. Their manners and customs were not, in all respects, such as ours; they lacked the manifold resources of our modern civilisation; their food was plain, their recreations simple and inexpensive; some of their notions we should, perhaps, regard as antiquated; but they were men; they were—many of them—heroes, they were true soldiers of the cross.

Yes, brethren, this college in the seventeenth century (not to speak of more recent times) produced its heroes and its saints. Shall it send forth none in the twentieth? You know the taunt addressed by the poet to the decadent Greeks:

> "Ye have the Pyrrhic dances yet;
> Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?"

And shall we be content to have retained some of the nomenclature of St Omers, to use some of the words which were in use there, without being solicitous, rather, to practise the virtues which were practised there, and to keep before us the old-time ideals? Must we hang our heads in confusion, and acknowledge ourselves the degenerate scions of a noble race? Or quite contrariwise, is it lawful to hope for a great Catholic revival in the years that lie before us; a revival in which we may have our share; a revival which shall issue, not in a mere transient wave of emotion, but in the solid fruit of a high and noble standard of Christian virtue? In these days our Lord does not ask us to die for Him; but He does ask us to live for Him, and in this, too, there is room for heroism. For my part, I believe and hope with all my heart that such a revival is in store, the realisation of that "Second Spring" which Newman heralded fifty years ago, but which would seem as yet to have but put forth its first buds. And I would hope that among the pioneers of this great movement may be some of you who have not yet seen the best years of your life pass by never to return.

And that this happy consummation may be brought about, may it please God, to raise up in our days men who will rouse us, and startle us, and shame and frighten us out of our serene and conventional self-complacency, out of our fatal proneness to flatter ourselves that we are "getting along fairly enough," and that so long as we are "getting along

fairly enough" there is nothing to be distressed about. If we would but extend our outlook beyond the narrow limits of our own little village, or of our school bounds, or of our comfortable homes; if we would seriously and perseveringly turn our attention to the needs of the Church at the present day, we should see that it is no time of peace in which we are living, but that the war between the Kingdom of God and the powers of darkness, the forces of evil, is raging as fiercely as ever it did in the world's history. It is raging openly and visibly in France, and within the life-time of most of us it may rage hardly less openly and visibly here in England.

Jam proximus ardet
Ucalegon:—

our neighbour's house is on fire; and the conflagration may soon envelope our own dwelling. It is no time for slackness, but rather for the most strenuous efforts; efforts on our part, here and now, in the form of a diligent self-training for the work that lies ready to the hand of any Catholic, whether priest or layman, who will but take it up.

The inheritance which our ancestors handed down to us at the cost of life, of liberty, of worldly goods extorted from them in the form of vexatious fines and exactions, it is for us to hand on to future generations not only intact but enhanced and increased. And this, in view of the dangers that in the near future threaten the Catholic Church in England, is no trifling enterprise. The evil calls, as we were reminded the other day, for a remedy which

shall be "as large, and deep, and generous as the danger is multifold, far-reaching, and menacing." And this large and deep and generous remedy is not to be looked for except, in the first instance, at the hands of men who, having been trained from early youth in the practice of self-denial, will, in later life, set the example of munificent and self-devoting charity that will shrink from no sacrifice in so noble a cause.

And do not think that these forebodings of dangers and of needs are inconsistent with the hopes that were expressed just now. The hour of the Church's need has ever been the hour of her opportunity. The need and the opportunity—both are at our doors.

No, brethren, the standard that has been set before you is not too high. It is the standard of the Gospel: "If any man will come up after Me, let him deny, himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." * O Jesus, that we might see Thy face, Thy bruised and wounded face, defiled with spittle and wet with Thy tears! Oh that we might look into Thine eyes, and read there the tender pleading of Thy Sacred Heart; read there its appeal to us to disengage and disentangle ourselves from the bondage of vanity and lies, that we may follow Thee, the Truth and the Life, along Thine own way, the King's Way, the King's Highway of the Holy Cross!

And on that hallowed path Mary, His Mother and yours, will meet you; no longer the Mother of Sorrow but of love and holy hope; and she will whisper words of sweet encouragement in your ears,

* St Luke ix. 23.

telling you that she is proud of you as her true and worthy sons; that the way, though steep and rugged, is short, and that the goal is near. To that Mother's care, on this the Feast of her Seven Dolours, I now commend you.

XXV.

THE ENGRAFTED WORD*

"Brethren, . . . with meekness receive the engrafted word, which hath power to save your souls."—ST JAMES i. 21.†

THESE words from the Epistle of to-day's Mass have suggested some thoughts which it may be useful for us to consider with some attention. When the Apostle tells us to receive "with meekness the engrafted word" of God, he is in fact giving us a valuable hint as to the dispositions with which we ought to listen to instructions on religious matters, or read religious books. We are to receive the word, he says, "with meekness." And this one word "meekness" may supply a first point for our consideration. Meekness may be roughly defined as "the patient endurance of disagreeable things." And St James was shrewd enough to understand that religious instruction, in any of its various forms, is commonly more or less disagreeable, and therefore calls for the exercise of meekness.

Of this truth we find a striking illustration in Old Testament history. It was part of the Old Dispensation that God should, from time to time, raise up

* May 21, 1905 (fourth Sunday after Easter).

† From the Epistle of the day.

prophets to rebuke the people for their sins, to warn them of the evils that would come upon them as a punishment of their sins, and to encourage the good to keep their trust in God, even in the midst of adversity and oppression. These prophets had on the whole, from a worldly point of view, rather a bad time. The fact is that a great many of the things they said were by no means pleasant to listen to. The prophets used a plainness and directness of speech which was not at all welcome to many of their hearers. "Prophecy unto us smooth things," said the people in the days of Ezekiel. They did not want to be rebuked, and threatened, and frightened; and they altogether objected to being roused out of their pleasant daydreams. They wanted to be entertained, flattered, perhaps amused, —or let alone. But "smooth things" did not enter into the programme of the genuine prophets; though there was no lack of false prophets who were ready enough to say plenty of smooth things, for a consideration. To entertain, to flatter, to amuse, or to let people alone, did not happen to be the office of a true prophet; and as these men very sensibly had more regard for the will of God than for the wishes of their fellow mortals, they were faithful to their trust; and the end of them was (so far as this world is concerned) that they were stoned or otherwise disposed of. And I do not know any more striking way of manifesting one's disapproval of a man than to throw stones at him, provided that the aim is good.

Now making all allowance for certain differences in the conditions of life then and now, the prophets

were the preachers of those days. But the practice of stoning preachers has gone out of fashion. People criticise them instead. Or they stay away, and never hear a sermon if they can help it. At school they can't help it; but we have to think of our lives after we have left school; and this is a matter on which it is worth while, with a view to our future lives, to have sound and sensible principles. Why do people, men especially, stay away from sermons? For a very simple reason; because they don't like them. But it does not follow that because it is a simple reason, therefore it is a good one. There are certain medicines which very few people like; yet there are occasions when, for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, we make no difficulty about taking such medicines. And in fact to allow ourselves to be guided simply by our likes and dislikes would be a poor way of getting through life, and would never lead us to anything really great or even manly. We must be ready to do many things that we don't like for the sake of the good that comes of doing them, and best of all, for the sake of God's will; or it is plainly God's will that we should hear sermons or instructions, at least sometimes, even after we have left school.

But why is it that people do not like sermons? To state the matter rather crudely, it is partly because, corrupt human nature being what it is, even the most eloquent preacher, provided he is faithful to his charge, can only partially succeed in rendering palatable truths which of their very essence are unpalatable to this same corrupt nature. While, as

for the ordinary preacher, it is simply impossible that he should please everyone. If he talks quietly, then the sort of people whom it takes an earthquake to stir, conclude—in a lazy sort of way—that he cannot be in earnest. If, on the other hand, he "lets himself go," and essays to be impressive or vehement, then the more fastidious among his audience declare that he ought to leave that kind of thing to more accomplished orators, and to content himself with the plainest sort of discourse. If he deals in generalities, one-half of his hearers will yawn and say: "How deadly dull!" If, on the contrary, he comes down to particulars and drives home the truth by means of pointed illustrations, then the other half complain that he makes the cap fit too tight, and that it is all prickly inside. And then again, there are always a certain number of persons whom nothing will satisfy. They do not know what they want, except that they always want something different from what they get.

What, then, is the solution of the difficulty? It lies, like the solution of many other difficulties, in looking at the matter in relation to God's will. To do God's will as perfectly as we can is or ought to be the one thing that we seriously care about. Now what is God's will in the matter? It is that the preacher or instructor should spare no pains to give us of his best, and that we on our side should make the best of what he gives us. Whether it pleases God to bless his endeavours with visible results, or whether, after beginning perhaps with high hopes and aspirations, he finds himself checked by many disappointments, it is his business to keep plodding along;

and it is our business to make allowance for the limitations and shortcomings which are inseparable from human nature in a priest as in other men. He is foolish if he deludes himself into thinking that he always renders agreeable that which is apt to be the reverse; and we, on our side, are foolish if we expect medicine to be always pleasant to the taste.

The practical conclusion is, then, that we should receive, "with meekness," that is to say, with a certain willing and cheerful patience, the word of God as it comes to us through very imperfect human channels.

But there is another word in the text, besides "meekness," which deserves attention. St James speaks of the "engrafted" word. We all understand something at least of the process of grafting. The gardener makes an incision, say, in the trunk of a crab-apple-tree, and inserts a slip cut from a Ribstone pippin; and the fruit produced by the branch that grows from the graft is not that of the trunk but of the slip. But in order that the operation may be successful, the operation must at least be performed; the incision must be made, and the trunk and the slip must enter into vital union. If we could imagine the trunk to have a will of its own, and to say: "No; I don't want any operation at all, I am quite content as I am;" the answer of course would be: "Then you will just go on bearing crab-apples, and no one will ever gather any Ribstone pippins from you." And so it is with us. If the word of God is to bear any fruit in and through us, we must receive it, as the trunk receives the graft, and we must contribute something of our own, viz., the co-operation of our

own understanding and will, whereby we reflect on what we hear, and determine to act in accordance with it. In other words, we must add docility to patience.

Moreover, there is just this other point of comparison between the grafting of a tree and the hearing of the word of God which it may be worth while to notice. If you have ever seen trees that have been grafted, you will have noticed that the gardener has covered up every place where a graft has been made with a great lump of clay. And herein is a parable of the way in which, the world being such as it is, and human nature being what God has made it, we receive the word of God. We have, so to say, to take it in clay. No human instructor can convey to our minds the truth on matters of religion, without wrapping it up in a great lump of his own thoughts and words. These are the clay, but the little slip of truth is hidden away in the clay, and it is the truth that does the work. The clay, that is to say, the thoughts and words, the comparisons, illustrations, examples, and so forth, in which it is wrapped up, only serve as a sort of protection or sheath. And so, when we are inclined to think that some preacher whom we have heard has been prosy or dull, we do well to remember that even though he may have used rather a liberal allowance of clay, or clay of a rather poor quality, nevertheless at the centre of all there is the tiny slip of truth, which will bear fruit if we receive it "with meekness," allowing it to be engrafted and to strike root in our hearts and minds.

XXVI.

FREQUENT COMMUNION*

"Not as your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."—ST JOHN vi. 59.

FREQUENT Communion, its advantages and its possible or supposed disadvantages, is unquestionably one of those subjects on which we should do well not to trust too easily to our own *à priori* judgments. It might be possible to persuade ourselves, as very many excellent persons in past times have persuaded themselves, that the Holy Eucharist is so great and stupendous a gift, to be treated with so deep a reverence, and its reception so solemn an act, that frequent Communion would be a sort of profanation of a most sacred thing. And yet we do well to distrust such reasoning; for it is, when carried to an extreme point, precisely that of the Jansenists, whose heresy has been one of the most destructive and mischievous that ever afflicted the Church.

On the other hand, a person might argue that, since our Lord offers Himself to us, and exhorts us

* May 20, 1905 (fourth Sunday after Easter).

to receive Him as the food of our souls, and since spiritual sustenance is more important (as our Lord Himself reminds us) than the food that supports the body, we could not too frequently avail ourselves of His offer. Nevertheless, convincing as the argument may seem to be, we might well hesitate to act upon the conclusion; lest, in our reliance on our own individual judgment, we should become the victims of some lurking fallacy.

And therefore, in making up our minds on the question, we shall do well to be guided by the voice of authority; while at the same time we may very legitimately lay the fullest stress on reasons the validity of which has been guaranteed by this same authority. Now, in speaking of authority in this connection, we must remember that there has never been any preceptive decree on the subject, except that by which the faithful are commanded to receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, at Easter or thereabouts. We must not multiply obligations, or add, on our own account, to the number of articles of faith. But in matters such as this, in matters which concern, not the indispensable minimum which is required as a condition of eternal salvation, but that which is desirable in our ordinary life and conduct, we ought to be ready to accept such guidance as is given us through the ordinary channels of ecclesiastical tradition and government. And if we turn to these channels or sources, we shall find that there is no room for serious doubt as to the advantages of frequent Communion.

To affirm without reservation that, in the first four

centuries of our era, it was the universal practice of all good Christians to communicate daily, would certainly be to go beyond the truth; for it is plain that in this as in other matters there were diversities of local usage. But it cannot be denied that it was a general custom for all the faithful who were present at Mass to communicate, or that daily Communion was at least not uncommon, especially in Rome, in Africa, and in Spain. Nor was this regarded as in any sense an abuse; but the practice was, on the contrary, most highly commended, even while, as various witnesses testify, it was gradually becoming rarer.*

It was only when, in the course of ages, the reception of the Blessed Sacrament had, through negligence and sloth on the part of pastors and people, become more and more infrequent, that the fourth Lateran Council passed a law to the effect that, at least once

* Some of the chief patristic passages bearing on the subject are the following:—St Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.*, n. 18 (daily Communion usual, and highly commended); St Basil, *Ep.* xciii., *ad Cæsariam* (daily communion commended as "pulchrum et valde utile," though in the writer's own neighbourhood or diocese Communion on four days in each week is more usual); St John Chrysostom, *Hom.* iii. *in Eph.*, nn. 4, 5 (all who are present at Mass should be worthy to communicate, and should do so, though it is not implied that individual daily attendance at Mass was general); St Jerome, *Ep.* xlviii., *ad Pammach.*, n. 15, and *Ep.* lxxi., *ad Lucin.*, n. 6 (daily Communion usual in Rome, and, as the writer is informed, in Spain, but apparently not in the East); St Augustine, *Serm.* lvii., n. 7; *Serm.* lviii., n. 5; *Serm.* ccxxvii., n. 4 (the Eucharist "our daily bread"); *Serm.* ccxxvii. ("debetis scire . . . quid quotidie accipere debeatis"); yet in *Ep.* liv., *ad Januar.*, n. 4, he thinks that the motives which lead some

a year, every one of the faithful should approach the Holy Table. And every priest knows, by sad experience, how difficult—nay, how impossible—it often is to induce Catholic laymen even to comply with the minimum of the paschal precept. But although this minimum was prescribed by law, the Church never ceased to regard frequent Communion as desirable. And in the sixth chapter of the twenty-second session of the Council of Trent we find this very plain statement: "The holy Synod would wish that at every Mass the faithful who are present . . . should communicate sacramentally, to the end that they might receive more abundant fruits from this most holy Sacrifice;" * though, recognising that this cannot be, or at any rate that it will not be the case, the Council proceeds to affirm that private Masses, in which the celebrant alone communicates, are by no means to be condemned or discountenanced.

to abstain from *daily* Communion should be respected; the tract *De Sacramentis*, lib. v. c. 3 ("accipe quotidie quod quotidie tibi prosit"); the 84th Sermon in the Appendix to St Augustine's works, n. 3 ("accipe quotidie, ut quotidie tibi prosit. Si quotidianus est panis, *cur post annum illum sumis*, quemadmodum Græci in Oriente consueverunt?"). These last words, together with those of St John Chrysostom ("frustra adstamus altari, nemo est qui participet") in the passage above referred to, show how rapid and complete was the decline of the practice of frequent Communion in the East. In the West, at least down to the ninth century, it was usual for all who were present at Mass to communicate, as appears from the Frankish capitulary ("placuit ut omnes qui ecclesiam intrant, nisi a suo fuerint excommunicati sacerdote, communicent") quoted by Mariani, *Sulla Comunione*, pp. 67, 68.

* Conc. Trid., Sess. xxii., chap. 6.

It is on these words of the Council of Trent, taken in conjunction with the teaching of the Fathers and the practice of the early Church, that certain distinguished writers and practical workers have grounded their opinions and their action when, in our own time, they have diligently and zealously fostered and encouraged the practice of frequent and even of daily Communion, and have defended it against all objections.

Nor have their efforts lacked the support of Papal approval. Many of us are familar with Mgr. de Ségur's little book on *Frequent Communion;* and it is well known that Pope Pius IX. not only spoke of it in the highest terms, but with his own hand distributed copies of it to all the priests who were to preach the Lent in Rome in 1861, and that he desired that it should be given to all first communicants.

But a far more weighty, as well as a more touching, testimony is afforded by the Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII. on the Holy Eucharist, issued on the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1902, a little more than a year before the Pontiff's death, and when he knew that his end was near at hand. From this Encyclical it may be useful to give two passages, one from its commencement and one from its conclusion. At the outset the Pope writes:—

"It was towards the close of His mortal life that Christ our Lord left this memorial of His measureless love for men, this powerful means of support 'for the life of the world.' And precisely for this reason, We, being so soon to depart from this life,

can wish for nothing better than that it may be granted to Us to stir up and foster in the hearts of all men the disposition of mindful gratitude and due devotion towards this wondrous Sacrament."

He then goes on to dwell at great length on the excellence of the Holy Eucharist, as an aid to faith, hope, charity, and the virtue of purity, and to recommend various practices of devotion in its honour. And he concludes thus:—

"But the chief aim of our efforts must be that the frequent reception of the Eucharist may be everywhere revived among Catholic people. For this is the lesson which is taught us by the example of the primitive Church, by the decrees of Councils, by the authority of the Fathers and of holy men in all ages. For the soul, like the body, needs frequent nourishment; and the Holy Eucharist provides that food which is best adapted to the support of its life. Accordingly all prejudices to the contrary, those vain fears to which so many yield, and their specious excuses for abstaining from the Eucharist, must be resolutely put aside (*penitus tollendae*); for there is question here of a gift than which none other can be more serviceable to the faithful, either for the redeeming of time from the tyranny of anxious cares concerning perishable things, or for the renewal of the Christian spirit and perseverance therein. To this end the . . . example of those who occupy a prominent position will powerfully contribute, but most especially the resourceful and diligent zeal of the clergy. For priests, to whom Christ our Redeemer entrusted the office of consecrating and dispensing

the mystery of His Body and Blood, can assuredly make no better return for the honour which has been conferred upon them, than by . . . inviting and drawing the hearts of men to the health-giving springs of this great Sacrament and Sacrifice, seconding thereby the longings of His most Sacred Heart."

To these weighty words of the late Holy Father it is only necessary to add that the context quite plainly and unmistakably shows that by "frequent" Communion is here meant something that goes beyond the practice, in itself most laudable, of communicating on Sundays and festivals.

Nor was this the only utterance of Leo XIII. on the subject, though—as addressed to the universal Church—it was the most public and solemn. Already in 1900 he had addressed to Père Coubé, S.J., a Brief in which, after deploring the widespread decay of faith and morals, he ascribes it principally to the neglect of the Sacrament of love. He says: "Those then who are labouring for the strengthening of faith and the reform of morals are well advised when they make it their endeavour to exhort the faithful to approach the Holy Table as often as possible; for the more frequently one receives this holy Sacrament, the more abundant are the fruits of holiness that are derived therefrom." *

With these words and wishes of his illustrious predecessor our present Holy Father, Pope Pius X., has shown himself most fully in accord. Among the

* The Brief is given in Lintelo, *Lettres . . . sur la Communion fréquente* (Tournai, 1905), pp. 116, 117.

most zealous propagators of the practice of frequent and even daily Communion in our own days must be reckoned Canon Antoni, the author of several brochures on the subject. To him Cardinal Gennari has written, by the express wish of the Pope, in the following terms: "Not only has His Holiness very willingly accepted a copy of your little book, but he is rejoiced at its publication. He is deeply convinced of the soundness of the teaching which it contains, and of the immense utility to the faithful of frequent and even daily Communion." And again, in a second letter: "His Holiness is greatly rejoiced at the zeal wherewith you have striven to promote among the faithful this most efficacious means for the revival of the Christian life. . . . He exhorts you to persevere in your efforts, and hopes that your book may have a wide circulation." In similar terms the same cardinal has written, by desire of the Pope, to Don Vittorio Mariani, the author of another brochure on the same subject: "I have," he says, "presented to the Holy Father your little work, entitled *Per Risolvere una Questione*, in which you undertake, by means of solid arguments, to facilitate the practice of daily Communion. Your treatment of the subject has greatly pleased His Holiness, for to this means [viz., that of frequent and daily Communion] he looks most especially for the revival of the Christian spirit and the sanctification of souls."* It may be useful to add that Don Mariani's pamphlet is professedly based on the Encyclical (*Mirae charitatis*) of Leo XIII., on the Holy Eucharist. The approbation of

* Quoted in Lintelo, *Lettres*, etc., pp. 40, 41.

Pius X. is, then, a testimony not merely in favour of the soundness of the author's teaching, but also in favour of his interpretation and practical application of the words of the late Pope.

But what, it may be asked, has all this to do with us, boys at school? Does this teaching of the Holy Father and of his predecessor practically affect us in our present state and condition of life? To this it might be enough to answer that, even though it should not directly affect us here and now, it is certainly right that we should clearly understand what the Pope's wishes are as regards the faithful at large; so that at least after we have left school we may not be in ignorance of a most important movement which is now being pushed forward with the highest ecclesiastical approval, and—what is still more to the point—that we may not ourselves, in our after life, stand outside of this movement as though it did not concern ourselves. We may, however, go further than this, and ask ourselves whether frequent and even daily Communion, so earnestly recommended by the Sovereign Pontiff, is really a matter which does not directly concern us, even while we are still at school. This is a matter in which we shall do well to be guided by the advice of our confessor. Yet, at the same time, it is well to remember that the advice of our confessor will, by the very nature of the case, be to a large extent determined by our own wishes. The advice which any director of souls would give to one who was cold and indifferent would not be the same as that which he would give to one who is zealous and eager;

and therefore, if we really have a strong desire to receive our Lord as often as possible, we shall do well to make that strong desire known in the proper quarter. The practice of frequent and even daily Communion, which for nearly twenty years past (*i.e.*, since 1886) has flourished in St Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, owed its origin entirely to the initiative of the boys themselves, a few of whom, at the outset, earnestly petitioned for this privilege.* The example set by them, and also by the boys of Don Bosco's institute at Turin, has since been followed in many schools and colleges in France and Belgium with very consoling results; and it may be that some day, here at Stonyhurst, Communion on ordinary week-days, throughout the school year, may come to be at least not uncommon or exceptional.†

A word, in conclusion, by way of reply to what is perhaps the most specious of all the objections that can be raised against the counsel of frequent Communion. A boy may say: "I find by experience that my Communions are more reverent and more fervent if I receive our Lord only once a fortnight or even once a month; the reception of the Sacrament is thus more of an event in my life than if it occurred every Sunday, still more so than if it occurred on all Sundays and several times in the week besides."

To this it may be answered, in the first place, that the objection is based on feeling; that feeling is a

* Lambert, *Le Régime Sauveur* (Paris, 1895), pp. 306 *sqq.*

† Since these words were spoken, the hope here expressed has, thank God, been abundantly realised.

deceptive guide; and that we ought not to attach more importance to our own feelings than, for instance, to the words of the Pope, who has so warmly commended the practice of frequent Communion. But although this would be a quite valid and sufficient answer, we may go a little further, and reason about the matter with ourselves. And first as regards reverence. Our Lord, after all, is the best judge of the reverence which we ought to show Him. When the King travels *incognito*, he wishes to be treated with less ceremony than when he goes in state; and it would be no indication of true and genuine respect to insist on showing him the same outward and ceremonial marks of honour as are rightly shown him on state occasions. The application is or should be obvious. If it is our Lord's wish, as it undoubtedly is, that we should receive Him frequently, then it would be a great mistake on our part to think that we are treating Him with more reverence by receiving Him comparatively seldom, and by making what He intends to be an ordinary incident (so to say) of our spiritual life into a sort of exceptional occasion.

And then again as regards the alleged want of fervour that may seem to go with frequent Communion. Of course if a man, or a boy, lives carelessly and thoughtlessly for a month or a fortnight, and then by a big effort pulls himself together for his reception of the Blessed Sacrament, it may very well be that his monthly or fortnightly Communion *seems* to rouse him to greater fervour than if he received weekly. But it is plain that to live habitually at a higher level, and more closely united to our Lord, is

better than to live in habitual carelessness and tepidity with periodical bursts or spasms of fervour, or of what seems to us like fervour. The steady burning of an electric light or of a gas-jet is obviously better for all practical purposes than the occasional flash of a lucifer match in the dark, though the occasional striking of a match in the dark would make a more vivid impression at the moment than would be made at any single moment by the continuous light.*

* A few days after the foregoing discourse was delivered (viz., on 3rd June 1905) a decree was issued from the Secretariate of the S. Congregation of Indulgences, in connection with a "prayer for the propagation of the pious practice of daily Communion." It sets forth that "Our Holy Father the Pope, being most earnestly desirous that the practice of daily Communion, so salutary and so pleasing to God, may by His grace be everywhere propagated among the faithful," grants certain indulgences for the recital of the prayer in question. Even this decree, however, has been almost thrown into the shade by the far more weighty document which, on 20th December 1905, was issued, with the Holy Father's authority, by the S. Congregation of the Council. It is a decree, as everyone now knows, "on the daily reception of the Holy Eucharist," and it directs that not only parish priests and preachers, but also confessors, are frequently and with great zeal (*crebris admonitionibus multoque zelo*) to exhort the faithful to the practice in question. It is further laid down that frequent and even daily Communion is to be promoted, not only in religious communities and ecclesiastical seminaries, but also "in all Christian establishments for the training of youth."

XXVII.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN*

"Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven; . . . for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."—ST MATT. vi. 20, 21.

IT happened not long since, as we may have read in the newspapers, that a party of workmen engaged in making some excavations near the High Street, Kensington, unearthed a number of coins of the Georgian period, principally "spade guineas," as they are called, and half-guineas. The coins were naturally a good deal tarnished and discoloured; and the workmen, not knowing their value, began to throw them away. We cannot exactly call it a foolish action, for it was excused by the ignorance of the men; but if they had been aware of the nature of what they were throwing away, they would certainly and rightly be said to have acted foolishly. Yet such, or something like this, only much worse, is the folly of which we, with all our knowledge, are too often guilty; for we not unfrequently throw away, just as though it were no better than so much rubbish, something which is very much more precious and valuable

* June 4, 1905 (Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension).

than a hoard of spade guineas. What is it that we thus throw away? *Opportunities.* I do not mean, merely or principally, opportunities of "getting on in the world"; though incidentally we miss these also. But I mean *opportunities of gaining merit* in the sight of God.

This is a point to which we by no means pay sufficient attention. Boys sometimes ask: "Is it a sin to do this or that?" And if the answer is: "No, it is not a sin," they immediately jump to the conclusion that it is a matter of perfect indifference whether they do it or not. And yet the conclusion by no means follows from the premise. To say that such or such an act is not sinful is to say that by doing it you will not (so far as we can tell) incur any punishment in the next world. But we may incur *loss*, very serious loss, without incurring punishment properly so called. To ask whether a particular act is a sin is like asking, in human affairs, whether this or that is an indictable offence. But there are plenty of actions which, though not indictable offences, are very foolish, and entail considerable disadvantages. For instance: suppose that the page on which these words are written were a postal order or a bank note, that is to say, a promise on the part of the Bank of England, or of the Postmaster-General, to pay a certain sum if and when the paper is duly presented. And now suppose that, instead of presenting the note or the order at the Bank or the Post Office, I were to tear it up or use it to light a pipe with. It is plain that the policeman could not "run me in" for doing so; because

to do so is not to commit an indictable offence. But I should be acting with extreme folly; and having thus acted, I should apply in vain for payment. Now it is just so with many actions and words which are not in themselves sinful, but by which we lose valuable opportunities of gaining merit. And the folly is all the greater because merit entitles us to an eternal reward, and its loss is an eternal loss. If a merchant, instead of attending to his office work wastes his time in trifles, he loses many an opportunity of making money. And yet, after all, even if he made a mountain of money, he could not carry a particle of it with him beyond the grave. But merit is an order on heaven's bank, and will be honoured there, not here. The merit of good works we do take with us; or rather we find it awaiting us, like luggage sent on in advance, on the other side.

We are too much accustomed to think of salvation as though it were alike for all. But there is as great a difference between the everlasting rewards of different individuals as there is between the incomes which men earn or inherit in this world. Or rather the difference is immeasurably greater. In the ordinary affairs of this world a man would be accounted foolish if (simply through his own neglect) he were to be satisfied with £100 a year when he had £100,000 a year within easy reach. But we too often commit this very same folly in the affair of our eternal salvation.

Now it is perfectly true that this motive of hope, the desire to heap up treasure in heaven, is not the

highest that can be appealed to. It is not so high a motive as that of love. But, on the other hand, it is higher than that of fear, and it is one to which, together with that of fear, our Lord Himself appeals; and therefore we cannot afford to neglect it.

So, then, we shall do well not to delude ourselves with the foolish fancy that the avoidance of sin is all that we have to care about. It behoves us also to exert ourselves to do what we know will be pleasing to God, and to avoid those things which, though not sinful, are yet displeasing to Him because they involve a foolish waste of opportunities. And, indeed, thus to set our hearts on doing good is itself one of the best means of avoiding evil. It is St Peter himself who tells us so. "Wherefore, brethren," he says, "labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things you shall not sin at any time." *

And now let us make, very briefly, a twofold application of this general principle of not missing opportunities of merit. And first as regards our daily duties and occupations. It is a great mistake to regard school regulations, and all that falls under the head of behaviour, as though it were simply and exclusively a matter of external discipline or police. Everyone knows, or ought to know, that school rules, and the ordinary common-sense dictates of good behaviour, do not bind under sin. Nevertheless, as we have been reminded in a previous consideration, these regulations and observances are for us, speak-

* 2 Peter i. 10.

ing generally, indications of what God would wish us to do, or to avoid, and of what we shall please Him best by doing or avoiding. We hear a good deal, from preachers and others, about the duty and counsel of self-denial. The subject is familiar to us, but we are perhaps too apt to think of self-denial as something vague and abstract, something up in the clouds, something that we should have to go out of our way to find occasions for practising. But it is precisely in our school work, in the observance of school rules, and in the whole department of behaviour, that such occasions occur. These are our opportunities of gaining eternal merit in God's sight; opportunities which it is supremely foolish to throw away.

And of a second class of opportunities we are reminded by this present season, with its rapid succession of ecclesiastical festivals; that is to say, opportunities of receiving our Lord in Holy Communion. Frequent Communion is a subject that has more than once engaged our attention; but it is one to which we may profitably recur again and again. For it is plainly a matter in connection with which it is of great importance that we should lay the foundations, here, of habits that will last us throughout our life-time. And yet, in this very business of laying the foundations of future habits, we shall do well to guard ourselves against a mischievous fallacy which to many is the cause of much needless loss. For it is indeed nothing short of a mischievous fallacy which sometimes leads a boy to say: "I will not make a practice of frequent Communion at school, because

even weekly Communion will be impossible for me after I leave school." Let us assume, first of all, that it really does prove impossible, and that for some years after leaving school you will find it impossible to approach the Holy Table more than once a fortnight or even once a month. Which is the more likely to persevere, under these circumstances, in fortnightly or monthly Communion; the boy who, when he was at school, availed himself to the utmost of the opportunities that were so easily within his reach, or the boy who omitted to do so? Common-sense should supply an answer to this question. But more, much more, than this. In the case of a very large proportion of us, the supposition that frequent or at least weekly Communion will be impossible after we have left school is simply untrue. For many of us, and probably for the great majority, weekly Communion at least will be just as possible—even though not so *easy*—then, as it is now, if only we care to exert ourselves a little. It only requires a little observation to discover that there are plenty of Catholic laymen, of all ranks of life, who are frequent communicants. It would be a great mistake to suppose that this most laudable form of piety is confined to the poor, or to persons in comparatively humble circumstances. It is to be found no less among those who are as well born, as wealthy, and as highly placed, as any of us are or will be. And indeed it is precisely from those who are conspicuous by their social rank and position that, as the late Pope Leo XIII. has told us in his Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist, a good and

edifying example in this matter is most especially to be looked for.

We are not, for the moment, considering Holy Communion as a defence against temptation, or again, as an exercise and pledge of that mutual love which should bind the Christian soul to its Saviour. These are profitable and fruitful topics. But just now we are looking at the matter from what may be called a business point of view, since our Lord in His great condescension to our human weakness allows us so to regard it. If you had it in your power to draw £10,000 from the bank regularly once a week, or even at shorter intervals, on condition that you should present yourself personally to receive it, would you allow any trifling obstacle to stand in your way? Would you say: "Oh! I can't be bothered going every week, or every two or three days; once a fortnight will satisfy me"? Or: "My grandfather did not do so, and why should I?" Or: "It is not the fashionable thing to do"? And so forth, and so on. And yet your faith tells you that the gift which our Lord offers you is of inestimably greater value than any sum of money that could be named; and so we shall find it to have been when the play is over, and the curtain comes down on this world of phantoms and shadows, and our true life begins. For this is that heavenly food of which the principal effects are not felt here and now, but which "endureth unto life everlasting," and for which our Lords bids us to "labour" rather than for perishable food.* It is this heavenly food, of which the effects

* St John vi. 27.

will be felt in the next life much more than in this, which is foreshadowed in those words of Isaiah: "All ye that thirst come to the waters, and you that have no money make haste, buy, and eat; come ye and buy wine and milk . . . without any price. Why do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you? Hearken diligently to me, and eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted." *

* Isaiah lv. 1, 2.

XXVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD*

"But ye are a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people."—1 PETER ii. 9.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service."—ROM. xii. 1.

THE uppermost thought in all our minds to-day, and the uppermost feeling in our hearts, must needs be of congratulation with the newly-ordained priest whose first Mass we are privileged to hear; and with those of his brethren who, yesterday morning, either received the grace of the priesthood or advanced one step nearer to that consummation of their hopes. And our congratulations will be all the more sincere, our prayers for the newly-ordained will be all the more earnest and fervent, in proportion as we ourselves apprehend the nature and appreciate the magnitude of the gift which they receive who are raised to the Christian priesthood, and of the responsibilities which they incur.

The Christian priesthood is, in strict literal truth,

* June 18, 1905 (Trinity Sunday). Preached at St Edmund's College, Old Hall, Ware, on occasion of the First Mass of a newly-ordained priest.

a participation in the office of the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. The priesthood of the Old Dispensation was but a type or faint foreshadowing of the Priesthood of Christ; but the priesthood of the New Law is something much more than this. It is not merely an echo or reflection of Christ's Priesthood, but it is one with it; in the Priesthood of Christ it is absorbed and incorporated. What the Christian priest does by virtue of his office, Christ does in and through him, even as the head or brain acts through the limbs and members of the body.

And yet there is a difference; for no metaphor or similitude can express or reflect the whole truth. When hand or foot obeys the behests of the brain, it does so by no will or intelligence or distinct consciousness of its own. But the members of Christ's mystical body, though united with their Divine Head by a bond that is closer and more vital than that which connects the various parts and limbs of our mortal frame, yet act with a personal understanding and will; and the subordination of their understanding and will to His direction is conscious and voluntary, and therefore on an altogether higher plane of value.

Assuming, then, that our priesthood is a participation in the Priesthood of Christ, we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews that the primary function of the priest is to act as a mediator between God and his fellowmen, and in particular to do this by means of sacrifice—*Omnis pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis*—"For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for

man for the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." * The sacrifices of the Old Law were, as we know, on many grounds imperfect, a mere shadow of better things to come. They were imperfect because the men who offered them were sinners, no less than were their neighbours on whose behalf they officiated. They were imperfect because the animals which were offered, as a substitute for him who offered them, were of no intrinsic value in the sight of God. "If you should kindle the forests of a whole mountain-side," He says in effect, "and consume in one great holocaust all the beasts that dwell therein, it would be of no account in my eyes." † The substitution of a dumb animal for a man was a purely symbolic rite, having precisely the value of a symbol, and no more. And the willingness of the victim to be thus offered by way of substitute, though crudely represented or simulated by means of garlands and gay trappings, was, after all, a mere legal fiction. But in the Sacrifice of Calvary the Priest was of unique dignity and of unique aptness for His office, possessing as He did the nature of God who was to be propitiated, and of man on whose behalf the propitiation was to be made, and therefore the ideally perfect Mediator. The Victim again was of infinite price; and besides this, Priest and Victim were one; so that there was in this case no mere symbolical substitution of an unwilling animal for a being of a higher order, but

* Heb. v. i.

† "And Lebanon shall not be enough to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering."—Isaiah xl. 16.

an entirely voluntary self-substitution of the infinitely worthy for the graceless sinner.

And as, under the Old Law, the offerings of living animals were supplemented by bloodless offerings of meal and libations of wine, which were regarded as an integral part of the complete sacrificial rite, so, under the New Dispensation, the self-offering of Christ on Calvary was supplemented, integrated, perpetuated through all time, by the bloodless sacrifice of the Mass. And to offer this sacrifice as the living instrument of Christ our Lord, speaking, as it were, with His voice and acting in His name, is the primary function of the Christian priest. His daily Mass is or should be the sunshine of his life, his support in all his labours and toils, and the centre of all his ministrations.

But more than this. The priceless grace of the priesthood not only confers the power of consecrating the sacred elements, and so of offering—in union with our Lord—the bloodless sacrifice of His Body and Blood; but it also stimulates or should stimulate the priest to make a complete and unreserved self-offering in union with the self-offering of Christ, whose priesthood he shares. As Christ was both Priest and Victim, so should the members of His priesthood be. Nor is this a new-fangled or far-fetched notion. Every Christian altar, as we know, has the character of a tomb or sepulchre, inasmuch as it contains, enshrined within it or beneath it, the relics of martyrs; in accordance with those words of the Apocalypse: "I saw beneath the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for

the testimony which they held."* The usage, and the hallowed words on which it is founded, alike remind us that the sufferings of the martyrs are incorporated, as it were, and made one with the sufferings of Christ, and that, in virtue of this incorporation or fusion, they are accepted by God as a true and efficacious sacrifice. Nay, they are in some sense a necessary and indispensable complement of our Lord's own supreme act of self-sacrifice, as St Paul tells us in those remarkable words to the Colossians: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."† For it is the very truth that the idea of perfect union with our Lord implies and includes union in endurance, no less than in prayer and in action.

And from whom is the realisation of this idea to be expected, if not from those on whom has been conferred the high honour of the priesthood with its grave responsibilities? We ought, then, to regard the impressive rite of ordination not merely as the conferring of sacrificial powers, but also as a laying of willing victims before the altar; victims whose self-offering, not yet consummated, has entered upon a new phase. As we were reminded in the second lesson of yesterday's Mass, it was a part of the Pentecostal ritual under the Old Law that, from every house, "two loaves of the first-fruits" should be offered to God.‡ Yesterday this house may be said to have laid before the Lord its double offering of first-fruits; the first-fruits of a new and—please God

* Apoc. vi. 9. † Col. i. 24. ‡ Lev. xxiii. 7.

—a glorious cycle or epoch of its existence. Be it our prayer, then, for the newly-ordained priests that their lives may show forth, even more fully than hitherto, that entire self-devotion which was symbolised by their ceremonial prostration on the steps of this altar, and which is a so important and all but essential condition of the efficacy of their priestly ministrations.

And while we pray for them, let us not forget that we too, laymen as well as clerics, have our share in Christ's priesthood; and that we too ought to bear our part in His function as a propitiatory Victim. It was not to ecclesiastics alone, but to the faithful at large, that St Peter addressed those words which were quoted just now: "But ye are a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people." And it was not to ecclesiastics alone, but to the faithful at large, that St Paul wrote: "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service." Instances of the Christian spirit of self-sacrifice abound in the most edifying and stimulating records of this venerable college, which are read in your hearing from day to to day throughout the scholastic year. May they abound, if possible, yet more in the century which lies before us. The times are full of menace and of danger for the welfare of the Church in this country; and for this very reason we have good grounds for entertaining high hopes and anticipations. For the hour of the Church's darkest peril has ever been the hour of her brightest opportunity.

XXIX.

UNION WITH CHRIST*

Viro ego, jam non ego, sed vivit in me Christus—"I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."—GAL. ii. 20.

IN the discourse which our Lord made to His disciples after the Last Supper, and with special reference to the institution of the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, He used these words: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He will take away: and everyone that beareth fruit, He will purge (or prune) it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . Abide in Me; and I (will abide) in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."† In these words are plainly expressed the very ideal of Christian perfection, which is a close and intimate and vital union with our Lord. And the same idea is expressed by means of another metaphor in all

* June 25, 1905 (Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi).

† St John xv. 1-5.

those passages of the New Testament in which the faithful are spoken of as members of a body whereof Christ our Lord is the Head. Neither similitude, of course, sets forth the whole truth. That of the body with its members emphasises the closeness of the union, that of the vine and the branches draws attention rather to the effects of the union in the production of fruit. It brings home to us what we learn from our Catechism, that we cannot of ourselves do any action that is meritorious of life everlasting without the help of God's grace. For the grace of God is as the vital sap which flows from the vine into its branches and twigs and tendrils.

As long as we are in the state of sanctifying grace this vital union is preserved in its essence, and there is a continual communication of supernatural force from Christ to the human soul, a communication which is none the less real because we are unconscious of it, somewhat as we are unconscious of the circulation of the blood and of many other functions which are perpetually going on within us. This, then, is the minimum of union with our Lord, the degree of that union which is an essential condition of our eternal salvation.

But it is plain that our Lord asks and expects something more from us than that we should preserve ourselves in the state of grace, that we should keep ourselves free from mortal sin. He wants us to do good as well as to avoid evil. And it is not stretching the significance of His words too far to say that, in proportion to the closeness of our union with Him, will be the efficacy of the work which we

do for Him. We speak, and we rightly speak, of doing things for God with God's help. But it would be nearer to the truth to say that it is God, or more specifically Christ our Lord, who acts in and through us, as the head or the brain acts through the limbs and members of the body. And here we may enter a little more closely into the comparison. Our conduct and our actions are too often like the movements of the recalcitrant, clumsy, and wayward fingers of an unskilled musician who is learning his first lessons. The fingers indeed are not dead; they are vitally united with the rest of the body; they are nourished by the blood which circulates through the whole frame; they are connected with the centres of life by nerves, and muscles, and tendons, and other physiological tissues. Nevertheless, they are slow to move at the behest of the brain, and notwithstanding all the learner's care, they frequently strike the wrong key, or miss the spot on the string which should have been pressed. And so it happens that a long course of self-training is necessary in order to set up so perfect and complex a set of relations between the brain and the hand that the latter may become promptly and accurately responsive to the bidding (so to say) of the central organ. And a process of self-training analogous to this, and certainly not less arduous, must be gone through in order that we may attain to a perfect union with our Lord. Of the nature of this process something will have to be said presently. But meanwhile it may be well to ask ourselves: Is this union with our Lord something to which all men are called; or

is it a privilege which is reserved for the chosen few, or peculiar, perhaps, to priests and religious?

To this question the answer is that every man is called to the very best that is within his reach, and that there is no reason whatsoever why a layman, or a boy at school who intends to remain a layman, should not attain to a very high degree of union with our Lord. St Paul was not speaking to priests and nuns when he wrote: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above . . . mind the things that are above, not those which are upon the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."* There are words addressed to ordinary men and women living in the world, to persons of all conditions of life, rich and poor, old and young, educated and illiterate, free citizens and slaves alike. To all of them he says: "Your life is hidden with Christ in God"; that is to say, your true life, your best and noblest life, is that by virtue of which you are united to Christ your Saviour. There is no legitimate occupation or profession which stands in the way of this union, provided only a man will take the means to attain to it. There would be many more downright holy men, such as the Church needs at this time, if only more of us would believe that, whatever their occupation or profession may be, holiness is within their reach, and that it is the true way to happiness. God knows best, and we are never so foolish as when we set up our own ideals of life in rivalry with His. God knows best, and from the union to which He invites us it would be folly on our

* Col. iii. 1-3.

part to shrink. And now as to the process by which this union is to be attained. For the present we may confine our attention to one means in particular, viz., the one which was instituted by our Lord for this very purpose, the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is, in a special manner, the Sacrament of union; the pledge of the union already established, and the instrument by means of which its fuller realisation is promoted. For the frequent reception of this Holy Sacrament this month of June, with its rapid succession of feast-days, has afforded us special inducements. And even though it should happen that during the remainder of the school year we should fall somewhat short of the fervour which has marked this month of the Sacred Heart, nevertheless it will have been to us the occasion of many graces, a seed-time rich with promise of the future. Nay, even though it should happen to any of you, later in life, to go astray with the prodigal—which God forbid; it may well be that some reminiscence of the happiness which you have enjoyed during these past weeks will be not the least among the salutary influences which will bring you back to the service of God. And in any case, whether the effects of your frequent Communions during this season should make themselves sensibly felt or no, you have by them laid up for yourselves treasures in heaven; for this is the bread which endureth unto life everlasting, and it is there that you will taste to the full the sweetness of the heavenly food of which you have partaken here below.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say that it is not the bare reception of the Sacrament, but its reception

in good and fervent dispositions that chiefly benefits us. For that closer union with our Lord to which it is so desirable that we should attain, is plainly not a matter of mere physical contact, but it must also affect the intelligence, so that we may become like-minded with Christ (as St Paul has it) and the will, so that we may learn to will what He wills. The point, however, to which I would most specially call your attention is this, that if only we are serious in our preparation and thanksgiving, the Sacrament itself is of the greatest possible help towards the acquisition of these very dispositions.

For, in the first place, the prospect of receiving Holy Communion, the desire not to be hindered from receiving Holy Communion, or the remembrance of having received our Lord very recently, ought to exercise, and for the most part does exercise, a great and salutary check upon our thoughts, and words, and actions, particularly in all that concerns the holy virtue of purity. And secondly, this careful avoidance of those things which most of all defile the soul, sharpens our spiritual perception, in accordance with the words of our Saviour, that "the clean of heart shall see God." Moreover, the recollection of mind which ordinarily accompanies the reception of Holy Communion prepares and disposes us to hear the voice of God in our hearts, either warning us of our dangers, or lovingly reproaching us for our want of fidelity to grace, or prompting us to greater generosity in His service. And, indeed, can it be that we should so frequently receive His great gift of Himself to us without being moved to offer ourselves to Him,

with a sincere determination to carry out His will in the whole shaping of our lives? And lastly, Holy Communion exercises our faith, arouses our hopes of that life everlasting of which this bread of life is the pledge, and stirs us up to a tender love of Him who is our best and dearest Friend as well as our Lord and Saviour; that one Friend who can never misunderstand us, and who, though all others should turn against us, will never abandon us; and whom we shall find waiting to receive us when the term of our service is over.

XXX.

NEIGHBOURLY CHARITY*

"And Mary, rising up in those days, went with haste into the hill country, unto a city of Juda ; and she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth."—ST LUKE i. 39, 40.

OUR Lady had received the Angel's message. Her humility had been troubled by the high terms of his salutation. Her maiden modesty had been for a moment troubled, lest the announcement that she was to be a mother should involve any going back upon her fixed purpose of virginity. On both points her alarm had been set at rest; and she had been assured by God's messenger that she was to be the Virgin Mother of the Word Incarnate. And what was her response? You know it well: *Ecce ancilla Domini.* The Mother of the Lord hastens to proclaim herself His lowly servant.

Nor was this declaration a mere empty phrase, one of those oriental compliments which on a first hearing seem to express much, but in reality mean little or nothing at all. On her lips the words: *Ecce ancilla Domini!* meant, in very deed, that her life was to be a life of service; and such in fact it was. And such

* July 2, 1905 (Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

too will our lives be if only we are wise, if only we will live as becomes men and Christians. In the comedy entitled *High Life Below Stairs* the various characters, who are all servants, make themselves ridiculous by aping the manners of their masters, by pretending to be what they are not, and by treating, as though it was their own property, the house and its contents of which they have some use only by the tenure of their service. And that is just what we do when we forget our dependence on God, and begin to live as though we had been put into the world merely to please ourselves. "Well done, good and faithful servant," are the words which we all hope to hear from our Lord's lips; but we could not reasonably hope to hear them unless our lives had been genuinely lives of service.

Ecce ancilla Domini! Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. We all know the incident which in the Gospel of St Luke immediately follows our Lady's utterance of these words, and the Angel's departure. We are reminded of it in the second of the "Joyful Mysteries" of our Rosary, when we are bidden to "contemplate" or consider "in this mystery how the Blessed Virgin Mary, having heard from the Angel that her cousin St Elizabeth had conceived, went with haste into the mountains of Judea to visit her." The immediate effect, as we may say, of our Lord's presence in Mary's womb was that she went at once on an arduous errand of humble charity. I say of humble charity, for when we are told that Mary "saluted" Elizabeth, we may be sure that she did so with all the deference that under ordinary circum-

stances might be expected from a younger to an aged relative; and her action drew from Elizabeth the surprised explanation: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"* That meeting was indeed the occasion of a manifestation of most perfect mutual reverence and courtesy, such as we see ideally depicted in the great masterpiece of Albertinelli, familiar to us all from the Arundel Society's admirable reproduction.

And this visit of our Lady to her cousin may serve to teach us a lesson of no small importance. We hear a great deal, and it is well that we should hear a great deal, at the present time, of the urgent need of Catholic laymen who will not be content to live selfish and self-centred lives, but will take an active part in public work of various kinds for the benefit of their fellowmen and in particular of their fellow-Catholics. It is well that this topic should often be put before us, for there is no lack of examples to show that the danger lest we should after all settle down to a self-indulgent manner of living is by no means chimerical.

At the same time there is another side to the question, or another aspect of it. For a large proportion, perhaps the majority, of young men, during the years which immediately follow after they have left school, there are comparatively few opportunities for engaging in public work of this kind. We shall not all of us be invited to stand for Parliament or for the County Council at the age of twenty or even thirty, just because we have been

* St Luke i. 43.

educated at Stonyhurst, and have achieved some academic distinctions, or even a university degree. And although many of us, it is to be hoped, will be able to do useful work as members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, even this will not be possible for all, especially at first.

And this being so, it is well that we should learn from our Blessed Lady to make a beginning with what may be called "neighbourly" charity; charity of a quiet and unobtrusive kind, exercised among our own more immediate surroundings. This is, of course, in accordance with the sound principle that "charity begins at home"; that is to say, among the members of our own household and our more immediate neighbours, always remembering that the word "neighbour" has had its meaning fixed for all time by the parable of the Good Samaritan, and that it admits of no distinction between rich and poor. If only a man is on the look-out for opportunities, he is sure to find some one within reach who is "down," some wounded traveller by the wayside to whom it may be given him to minister. It may be some aged person who is past work, and as it were laid aside, and to whom the kindness of an occasional visit will make all the difference between querulous depression and patient resignation. Or it may be some young man of your own age or thereabouts, but slightly below you in the social scale, some one whom you might be tempted to despise because his clothes begin to show signs of being threadbare, but whom you would do much more wisely to befriend, not in the spirit of condescension, but in that of true

Christian brotherhood; knowing very well that it is not by the state of their wardrobe that men will be judged. But indeed it is needless, and not very useful, to multiply instances; for those which we might imagine would almost certainly turn out to be quite unlike the reality. It is more to the purpose to lay stress on the general principle of being on the look-out for opportunities of exercising personal kindness. And it is a good plan, if one is at a loss where to begin, to ask our parish priest to put us on the track of some good work to be done.

Moreover, we must never forget that the true source of all Christian charity is the love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. If that love is strong within us, then it will prompt us and lead us to find ways of showing it in action. The most elaborate engine will do no work at all, unless the fire is kindled in the furnace, or the battery is charged. And the fire which is to set in motion all the machinery of ingenious charity is the love of our Lord. This love we shall kindle by our frequent reception of Him in His Holy Sacrament. It was His presence within our Lady that caused her to set out on that errand of kindness which we commemorate in to-day's Feast of the Visitation. And His frequent presence within us, in Holy Communion, should produce in us corresponding results. And therefore we cannot too often renew and strengthen our determination to be faithful—even at some cost to ourselves—after we have left school, to our resolutions with regard to this matter.

XXXI.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM*

"Brethren . . . be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God."—ROM. xii. 2.

IF, in some fanciful dream, like that of Alice in Wonderland, you were to see the Prime Minister playing marbles in the lobby of the House of Commons, or an elderly stockbroker chasing a butterfly round the Royal Exchange, or a respectable banker sitting on the steps of his bank and blowing bubbles, or a duke drinking double X. with a drayman, you would probably come to the conclusion, even in your dream, that these various personages had taken leave of their senses, and had become, for the moment at least, either very childish, or very silly, or extremely vulgar in their respective tastes. Now, all these ridiculously impossible pictures may serve as a parable of worldliness, which, when rightly considered, is both childish and silly and vulgar.

This is a subject on which it is most desirable to

* July 9, 1905 (fourth Sunday after Pentecost).

speak with moderation and with caution, and by no means to exaggerate. And yet, notwithstanding the intentional absurdity of the examples chosen, they do not exceed, but fall short of, the absurdity of deliberate worldliness in men who know enough to know better than to be deliberately worldly.

We should call a man childish if, notwithstanding his mature years, he were seriously to occupy himself with the toys of infancy. In ordinary human affairs he would be called foolish if, for the sake of the short-lived pleasures of dissipation, he were to forego the lifelong advantages which he might gain by diligent attention to his business or profession. And we should say that his tastes were vulgar if he found his delight in things that under normal circumstances appeal only to the untrained senses and uncultured minds of those who lack his advantages of birth and education.

Now, if we apply the parable, we shall see that all this is verified in the case of the worldly man. He, too, sets his heart upon things which are the merest child's play and the veriest trifles by comparison with his true, his eternal, interests. And therefore he deserves to be called childish and foolish. And again, he too finds his delight in things which are more utterly beneath his highest capacities as a Christian, than the grossest pleasures of the vulgar are below the natural capacities of the man of education. And it is well that we should have deeply rooted in our minds a strong conviction of the childishness, the folly, and the vulgarity of worldliness in the sight of God and His angels.

And it is the more important that we should acquire and deepen this conviction, because, although the matter is simple enough in itself, even people who are otherwise reasonably well instructed do not always clearly apprehend what precisely is meant by worldliness. For the difference between a worldly and an unworldly man does not consist simply in the things they do or avoid. Two men may be engaged in precisely the same profession—nay, they might even be partners in the same undertaking—and they might be equally diligent and equally successful, and yet one of them might be very worldly, and the other very much the reverse. The difference turns primarily on the motives with which a man acts, and the end or aim which he sets before himself. A worldly man lives for this world alone; an unworldly man lives for God and the next world. But there are degrees in worldliness as in other qualities, and a man may be worldly and religious by fits, or his life may show a sort of compromise, always a more or less unsatisfactory compromise, between the service of God and slavery to the world.

The worst form of worldliness is, of course, that in which a man lets himself go altogether, obeying the impulses either of his lower passions, or of avarice, or of pride, without any regard at all for God's law as such, or for the next life. Such a man will ordinarily be, among other things, more or less brutally selfish. Consciously or unconsciously he may veil his selfishness under an outward appearance of respectability; but he will, on occasion, show himself either openly harsh, or at least inwardly heartless, towards all those whose

well-being does not obviously contribute to his own. But on the thought of such a man we need not dwell; for he is not the sort of character, please God, who is likely to come forth from a Catholic school. Short of this, there is the worldliness of the man who does indeed intend to avoid mortal sin, or at least hopes to repent of it some day, but whose mind is on the whole chiefly set on having a good time, and doing the best he can for himself in this world. To him the next life is indeed a reality to be reckoned with, but it has in his eyes the importance of a sort of appendix or postscript to the more weighty affairs of this present life. This is a state of mind into which it is only too possible for even a Catholic to fall, and we have all of us to be on our guard lest, by slow and imperceptible degrees, we should fall into it. And in order that we may avoid this most undesirable result, we shall do well to remember that it is a state of mind which is precisely analogous to the grotesque examples with which we started. It is a state of mind in which things are viewed, as it were, topsy-turvy; in which trifling things are treated as important, while really important matters have, in familiar phrase, to "take a back seat." It is a state of mind the folly of which we shall then clearly perceive when it is too late to seek and find a remedy. Better far that we should learn to see it now, and hold fast to our Christian point of view.

Short of this, again, is that milder type of worldliness which is found in those who are, indeed, most laudably careful to avoid not only mortal but even venial sin, but who limit their solicitude to this kind

of negative goodness, and who follow their fancy and their inclination in all that is not actually sinful. Such men do not, of course, deserve to be called "worldly" without qualification; and yet there is a strain of worldliness in their composition, inasmuch as passing pleasures and temporal affairs still hold a disproportionately large place in their minds, and they lack that quality of zeal and active energy for good which is the sure outcome of a strong faith, a firm hope, and the fervent love of God.

Faith, hope, and charity—these three virtues, with all that logically and practically flows from them, are the very antithesis or opposite of worldliness; for by faith we believe that the best that is in this world is but a shadow of better things to come; by hope we look for these better things to come as our true and lasting inheritance; and by charity we cling fast to God, not only refusing to be separated from Him by sin, but uniting our will with His, that we may carry out in every particular the work which He has given us to do. Unworldliness does not consist in the neglect of temporal affairs, in so far as these fall within the sphere of our duty. It would, for instance, be a kind of sham piety which would make a boy neglect his studies, or a man the care of his family, under pretext of greater devotion. But unworldliness does consist in regarding our temporal affairs and the duties of our state of life as they ought to be regarded, viz., as a part of our service of God.

And as in worldliness, so also in unworldliness, there are degrees and kinds or types. Not to multiply distinctions, there is what may be called

the common-sense type, and there is the heroic type. The common-sense type is that of him who says: "With God's help, I will not be content with the avoidance of sin; but I will make it my endeavour to do in all things, great and small, that which I have reason to believe will please God best." This is precisely what is implied in the letters A. M. D. G., standing for the motto *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*, which we are accustomed to place at the head of all our school exercises. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam;* that is to say, it is not enough for us that this or that action should not be sinful, but we intend, whenever two alternative courses of action present themselves to us for choice, to choose the better of them, even though it should be less agreeable to our lower nature or to our pride. It is a simple principle, as appears from the very terms in which it is expressed. And it is a common-sense principle, inasmuch as it is only common-sense to do that which, in the long run, is quite sure to be for our own best interests. It is the sort of common-sense which would lead a man, if a half-penny and a sovereign were offered him, to choose the sovereign; the half-penny representing any temporal pleasure or advantage whatsoever, and the golden coin standing for the everlasting reward which waits on every least action done with the intention of pleasing God. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.* It is a simple and a common-sense principle, but it is very far-reaching in its application; and it may be and ought to be applied to our use of time, of money, of our own senses, and of all God's creatures. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.* If only we will school our-

selves to act consistently and perseveringly upon this principle of common-sense, we shall attain, without knowing that we have done so, to a very high perfection indeed; and it may be that we shall some day reach the yet higher level of what may be called "heroic unworldliness."

This is the unworldliness of those who not only are content to forego what is pleasant, and determined to do or endure what is unpleasant, for the sake of doing God's will more perfectly, but who see in adversity, in disappointments, in crosses of all kinds, a positive boon, inasmuch as these things make us more like to our Divine Master and Model, bring us nearer to Him, and qualify us to co-operate more efficaciously in the great work which He came on earth to do. There is no reason why some of us should not attain, even in our schooldays, to at least the first beginnings of this love of the Cross for which Aloysius Gonzaga, Stanislas Kostka, and John Berchmans were conspicuous even at your age.

But to return to what more immediately concerns the bulk of us. As the antithesis to worldliness lies in faith, hope, and charity, so a principal antidote to worldliness is to be found in the great Sacrament of faith, and hope, and charity, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. In this great gift of our Lord we shall find, if we use it aright, a counter-attraction which will stay and steady us from passively yielding to the delusive seductions of Christ's enemy and ours, the world.

XXXII.

THE SCAPULAR A REMINDER OF DEATH*

"My son . . . forsake not the law of thy mother; that grace may be added to thy head and a chain of gold to thy neck. . . . Let not mercy and truth leave thee; put them about thy neck, and write them in the tables of thy heart."—PROV. i. 8, 9; iii. 3.

THE Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is, as we all know, intimately associated with that badge of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary which is known as the "brown scapular," and which is, in fact, the habit of the Carmelite Order in a reduced and attenuated form. With this badge most of us have at one time or another been invested; and no opportunity could be more suitable for renewing our acquaintance with its meaning and significance than that which is afforded by the annual recurrence of yesterday's festival.†

On the other hand, the Gospel appointed to be read on the eighth Sunday after Pentecost, viz., the

* July 17, 1904 (eighth Sunday after Pentecost). This discourse, which was unavoidably omitted from the collection entitled *In the Morning of Life*, may not unsuitably find a place here.

† The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16.

parable of the Unjust Steward, very appropriately brings before us, during these closing days of the school year, the thought of that account of our stewardship which we shall all of us one day be called upon to render, of that final examination which we shall all of us be required to undergo, and on which our fortunes for eternity will depend.

And a link between these two apparently disconnected topics may be found, if we agree, as we very reasonably may agree, to regard our scapular as a reminder of death and judgment. The notion is not so far-fetched as it might at first sight seem to be. The frequent recital of the "Hail Mary" has taught us, or ought to have taught us, to associate devotion to our Lady with the thought of our last hours; for the prayer ends with the words: "Pray for us sinners now and *at the hour of our death.*" And now, as regards our scapular more particularly, it is a truth familiar to us all, that we can none of us foresee the circumstances of our death. We may die wearing the king's uniform on the field of battle, or in one of those awful catastrophes of naval warfare with the thought of which contemporary history has familiarised us; we may die far from home and friends, or we may die in the midst of them, and tended by them with loving care; we may die surrounded with all the consolations of religion, or deprived of them; we may die young, or in the middle term of life, or in extreme old age; we may die rich, or we may die relatively poor; the clothes at our bedside or in our wardrobe may be of the newest and most fashionable cut, or may be old and worn and travel-stained; but,

amid all the varieties of circumstance which may characterise our several deaths, in this particular we hope to be all alike, that we shall die in our scapular, the witness of our trust in Mary, the pledge of her fidelity to us. Our scapular may be taken as representing that chain or collar of wisdom, mercy, and truth, which, in the texts that have been quoted from the Book of Proverbs, we are exhorted to put about our neck. And the connection with the thought of death may be supplied by a legitimate application of another text, in which the writer of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, speaking of wisdom, says: "In the latter end thou shalt find rest in her, and she shall be turned to joy . . . and her chain shall be to thee a robe of glory. . . . Thou shalt put her on as a robe of glory, and thou shalt set her upon thee as a crown of joy." *

We all of us wish to die in our scapular. And this, not as though the scapular could save us, as it were, by mechanical means, and independently of the dispositions in which we may then be. No Catholic holds such an opinion as this. It is not in any such ill-grounded trust that the true value of the scapular lies, nor even, perhaps, is it chiefly to be esteemed as a means of gaining many indulgences, though these, of course, are by no means to be despised. Its truest value, for some of us at least, may lie in this, that it may serve us as a reminder, *now* of the day of death and of judgment towards which we are hastening, and *then* of happy days, perchance, long gone by, of days when our love of Mary was yet

* Ecclus. vi. 29, 30, 32.

fresh and tender; a reminder that in the intercession of Mary, the Refuge of Sinners, there is yet hope for us, however widely we may have wandered astray in the meanwhile. But, please God, we may not need in that last hour to look back over an interval of squandered years. Please God, there may be no such breach of continuity in our lives. Please God, we shall not need that reminder at the hour of death; and that we may not need it *then*, it is well that our scapular should serve as a daily reminder to us *now*, to make the intervening years a fitting preparation for that hour.

In meditations on death such as may commonly be read in books, a good deal of stress is sometimes laid on assertions as to how we shall feel when our last hour is approaching, supposing, that is, that we have a fair warning as to our state. Now, these assertions are apt to be somewhat misleading: partly because—as a matter of fact and observation—men's feelings at the point of death are very often not at all after the pattern laid down in the books; and partly because, after all, our chief concern is not how we shall feel in that hour, since it is not our feelings that will determine our lot for ever.

And first, as to the fact. It is highly probable that when death is drawing near, we shall experience a good deal of discomfort, and perhaps very severe pain. Whether we shall think much about God, and our souls, and the next world, will depend for the most part on the question whether we have accustomed ourselves to think much about these subjects when we were in good health. To quote

the words of an experienced priest long since dead: "The last day of a man's conscious life is apt to be very much like his average day; except that if he has been habitually devout it will probably be rather above the average, if indevout, probably rather below it." Because, if he has been habitually devout, the conviction that he is nearing his end will tend strongly to deepen his piety; the sense of the vanity of the world, and of his own helplessness and entire dependence on God, will grow upon him, and will draw from him many an earnest prayer and petition of the heart throughout the comfortless hours of the day and the long restless nights. But if he has been habitually indevout, and moreover careless about self-restraint, then it is to be feared that during those last days, when all his faculties are dulled and weakened, he will be more occupied about his bodily pains than about the needs of his soul, and his characteristic faults and failings are apt to assert themselves rather more than in time of health. And this may be so even though he should have the grace to pull himself together for the few brief moments that are needed for his confession, and for the reception of the holy Viaticum and the last anointing.

Nor must we lose sight of the possibility that matters might be even worse than this. "Death," says Bishop Hedley in a very striking passage of his *Retreat*—"death would not be so terrible could we make sure even of that last hour which our merciful Father gives us before He summons us to judgment. But we cannot do exactly as we would.

There is an overmastering drowsiness upon us that would wrap us in quiet forgetfulness, but for the efforts of our alarmed soul." Nay, even the alarm and the efforts may be alike wanting. "The brain, the nerves—the instruments of spiritual activity—are worn out, attenuated, almost useless. Yet the most awful crisis of our existence is now upon us, and we want all our powers at their best to meet it. What is far worse is that," in the case supposed, "we are bound in fetters of another kind, the result of a life of selfishness and sin. For we must never forget that, on the deathbed, it may be *impossible*, *morally speaking*, for a man to make an act of contrition. It is true that contrition is always, by God's grace, possible; but it may become so difficult that it becomes morally impossible. For although contrition is an act of the will, yet the will, as we well know, is enormously influenced and drawn by passion, habit, and temptation. . . . We have read of men who," at the hour of death, "notwithstanding their many apparent virtues and good qualities, have been seemingly *unable* to renounce or reject some sins in which pride, avarice, or lust were concerned. And they have refused to repent, and turned to the wall, and died in their sin! Their imagination, their pampered passions, and the inveteracy of evil passion had been too much for them, even in the presence of death."* Moreover, it is to be remembered that this paralysis of the will, of which the Bishop speaks, may be the result not only of temptations that are strongly felt at the moment, but also of an habitual

* Hedley, *A Retreat*, etc., pp. 84-85. Italics his.

and perhaps life-long lack of serious earnestness and sincerity in our relations with God. A man whose contrition has been but half-hearted, and only half sincere, on the rare occasions of his reception of the Sacraments, cannot safely promise himself that his sorrow for sin, and his renunciation of sin, will be genuine and thorough at the dread hour of death.

And therefore it is of the utmost importance that we should habitually keep alive in our souls a horror of sin, that we should by no means allow ourselves to become blind to our own transgressions of God's holy law—that is to say, either to the fact of these transgressions or to their gravity—and that we should never retire to rest at the close of a day's work without renewing our sorrow for the offences both of that day and of our past lives. And here we may take occasion to impress more deeply on our minds the meaning and significance of the prayer which we are accustomed to recite together every evening before our examination of conscience—a prayer which it may be hoped that we shall continue to make use of till our dying day.

"O my Lord Jesus Christ, Judge of the living and the dead, before whom I must appear one day to give an exact account of my whole life, enlighten me, I beseech thee, and give me a humble and contrite heart, that I may see wherein I have offended Thine infinite Majesty, *and judge myself now with such a just severity that then Thou mayest judge me with mercy and clemency.*"

"That I may judge myself now with a just severity." Do we indeed judge ourselves with this

just severity, or do we rather hasten to make excuses for ourselves? We all know how careful men are in these days of scientific invention to have clothing that is water-proof, and buildings that are fire-proof, and safes that are burglar-proof. These inventions do not indeed always fulfil their promise, but at least no pains are spared to secure these most desirable qualities. But it is much more important to consider whether the excuses which we make to ourselves for our sins are *judgment-proof*. For instance: "I could not help it." Could not help it? Well, of course, if I really could not help it, there was no sin at all. Common-sense teaches us that what is altogether beyond our power to avoid cannot be sinful. But could I not help it? Has not God given me the faculty of free-will, and has He not promised to those who ask it the assistance of His grace to make good the weakness of their will? Could not help it? Have we not reason to fear, lest, in the words of the Apostle, we "deceive ourselves with vain words" when we put forward such an excuse as this? Or: "He made me do it!" If indeed anyone has led us into sin, that evil companion is greatly to be pitied, and assuredly he will have a terrible account to render for doing the devil's work in what ought to be—and, please God, for the most part is—a home of Christian virtue. But what of the victim of such temptations? Are we then beasts of burden that we should be led as by a bridle or a halter? Have we no independence, no moral courage, no power of saying "no" (and it need not be said too politely) to an evil suggestion? We all remember Adam's

answer when he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. He too tried to throw the blame on another, nay, in some sense even upon God Himself. "The woman *whom Thou gavest me* for my companion gave me of the tree, and I did eat."* That excuse was not judgment-proof. Neither will ours if we should find voice to utter it: "He made me do it." Or yet again: "I only did what everyone did." That plea is too frail and flimsy to be worth serious discussion. "Everyone did it." We know well enough that this is not true. We know well enough that there is no lack of good and edifying examples for us to follow, that there are plenty of those among whom we live who would neither do nor speak of the things for which this foolish excuse is sometimes made, either in word or in the secret thoughts of those who would palliate to themselves their own guilt.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips; that my heart may not incline to evil words, to make excuses in sin."† In these words of the Psalmist the celebrant is directed by the rubrics to pray as he censes the altar at the Offertory of the Mass. And it is a prayer that we may well make our own. May God preserve us from the fatal habit of making excuses to ourselves for our sins; lest, when the last hour has sounded for us, we should have no better excuses to offer to the Supreme Judge, and lest they should prove unavailing to avert a most terrible doom.

Against such a calamity our scapular may help to forearm us. We wear the livery of our Lady. We

* Gen. iii. 12. † Ps. cxl. 3, 4.

hope to wear it at the hour of our death. Now we should be ashamed to array ourselves in the colours of a cause to which at heart we were false. "Let not mercy and truth leave thee: put them about thy neck." The scapular which we put about our neck is not a mere piece of coloured material, like a scarf or a necktie; it is a symbol of our subjection to "the law of our Mother" which—with God's grace—we do not intend to forsake. "Put them about thy neck, and grave them in the tables of thy heart." The very position of our scapular, as we wear it, should remind us that the external sign would be to little purpose unless it were indeed a sign of principles which we cherish in our hearts. It should be an outward sign of inward dispositions, and should remind us to cultivate those dispositions.

Every night, after our examination of conscience, we "endeavour, as much as possible, to put ourselves in the dispositions in which we desire to be found at the hour of death." And we do well to make this endeavour very seriously; for on the state of our soul at that hour will depend our eternal destiny, as we shall discover when we wake up in the next world.

Then, at last, the scales that dimmed our vision of eternal truth will have fallen forever from our eyes. Then we shall see clearly the true story of our life, and its true meaning. Then deception will be no longer possible, either deception of others or that self-deception into the habit of which we are all of us so apt to fall. And now let us help ourselves by a comparison, and it is one for which we have good

and sufficient warrant in the words of Holy Scripture, and which is indeed suggested by the parable of the stewards. Let us imagine, then, that the record of our life is entered in a great book, an account-book or day-book, with a page for each day, or week, or month of our lives. We are supposing, now, the case of one who is saved; but even those who are saved will have to undergo an audit of their accounts. In this book, then, all our expenditure of the capital entrusted to us, all expenditure of personal energy, of influence, of time, or even of money and material resources, has been most carefully and accurately entered; and the question for us is, how much of this expenditure will be "passed" by the authorities, as giving a claim to compensation; always remembering that the compensation will be on the inconceivably generous scale according to which our Lord will reward those of His servants who have shown themselves faithful stewards of their Master's goods. Prayers, so far as they have been said—or mental prayer so far as it has been made—without wilful distractions; these, of course, will count. Acts of charity, alms, kind words, and even kind thoughts, will be set down to our credit. Work, all work, of whatsoever kind, which has been done while we were in the state of grace, and with a good motive, will most certainly count. And, under the same conditions, all reasonable recreation, that is to say, recreation in which we have engaged for the rational purpose of better fitting ourselves for work, or in which we have joined with the very praiseworthy intention of helping others to be happy and cheerful

(as should be the case with our obligatory games here at school),—all this will be reckoned as legitimate expenditure, will be passed with approval, will rank as meritorious, and will entitle us to compensation. These, of course, are only specimens of good and valid entries in the great day-book in which our accounts for eternity are posted, and from which it will appear whether, and to what extent, we have—in our Lord's words—laid up treasure for ourselves in heaven; treasure that is safe not only from the moth and the rust, and from the depredations of human thieves and the machinations of human swindlers, but from the irresistible thief, death, whom no earthly treasure can escape. And, with regard to that great day-book, we may remind ourselves, now, that the days for which there is the best record of work done for God, or of endurance for God's sake, rather than those on which we have enjoyed ourselves most, will then be seen to have been our real "good days."

But, on the other hand, those pages (if there should be any such) which represent days or weeks during which a man has been living in the state of grievous sin, and still more, all those individual entries which record sinful thoughts, or words, or actions, will—to say the least of it—not be reckoned to our advantage. So much is plain and obvious. But more than this. All expenditure of time, of energy, of money, or other material resources, on idle occupations, or on profitless self-indulgence in whatsoever form—such items as these will be finally and forever erased from the credit side of our account. There will be nothing

to show for them. In respect of these, our Angel Guardian will be able to produce no vouchers on our behalf. Then, in the clear and searching light of that examination, the last which each of us, individually, will ever have to pass, we shall understand at last the wastefulness of worldliness; then in the bitterness of our hearts we shall exclaim upon our folly in having on so many occasions (it may be) followed the ways of self-seeking and idleness, and vanity and frivolity, rather than the ways of mercy, of diligence, and of truth. Then we shall lament—but alas too late!—the bad investments of time, of money, of energy, of opportunities, which we have made; and the poor use to which we have put the talents with which God has entrusted us. And how much greater would be our regret if, not only in detail and in particular instances, but in the whole course of our life and employments, we had been wasteful of our Master's goods through a culpably unwise choice at the start; if we were to find that in determining our path in life we had allowed ourselves to be guided merely or mainly by worldly considerations, instead of making it our single aim to carry out in all things, both great and small, His all-holy will, and His good pleasure in our regard.

We shall indeed most bitterly regret these things if they can be alleged against us. But please God we may be saved—please God we may have the grace to save ourselves—from such regrets. Please God we may learn betimes to take for our very own our common motto: *Quant je puis:* "As much as I can"—for God and for man; and may God in His

mercy grant that we shall persevere in these wise and worthy dispositions to the end of our lives.

When it was suggested just now that we should do well to accustom ourselves to look on our scapular as a reminder of death, the purport of the suggestion was not that the scapular should bring to our minds the bare fact that death is in store for us all; but that it should serve to stir up in our memories some such thoughts, in connection with death and judgment, as those with which we have just now occupied ourselves. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

XXXIII.

THE EDUCATION PERIL: AN APPEAL*

"And the King, answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it unto Me."—ST MATT. xxv. 40.

THERE is at this moment a war going on, the incidents of which do not occupy a large space in the newspapers, but which is, nevertheless, no less real, and far more momentous in its consequences, than the war between Russia and Japan. It is not of recent origin, nor can we look to see its close; for it has been in progress since the world began, or rather, since the first creation of the human race; and it will last till what we call time has run its course. It is the war between the cause of God and the powers of darkness or of evil; or, since our Lord's time, between the kingdom of Christ on the one hand, and on the other hand "the world," in the scriptural sense of that term, so frequently used in the inspired writings of the Apostle and Evangelist St John. And the more thoroughly we can bring home to ourselves that the warfare *is* very real, that its issues are

* July 23, 1905 (sixth Sunday after Pentecost). Preached at St Vincent's Orphanage, Fulwood, Preston, in aid of the Institution.

of supreme importance, and that it is for us to take sides—or rather, to exert ourselves strenuously on the side which we have long since professedly taken—the better it will be for ourselves, as well as for the cause which we have, or ought to have, at heart.

Let us consider this warfare for a moment, as it has been exemplified in the religious history of this country during the last three or four centuries. We all of us know that if, in the familiar words of the hymn, the "Faith of our Fathers" is indeed "living still" in these islands, it is "in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword." In general terms, at least, we know at what cost, and in spite of what determined efforts to stamp out the Catholic religion, our forefathers handed down to us an inheritance which—precisely because it has come to us without any trouble of our own—we are so apt to undervalue. But we are slow to apprehend the fact that, although the methods of warfare have changed, the Church in England, at this moment, finds herself the object of a hostility more insidious indeed, but not less determined, than that which she had to face in the days of open and avowed persecution.

And it is precisely because the methods of warfare have changed, and because the attacks on the Church are more insidious in their character than in the days of the penal laws, that it is possible even for educated Catholics hardly to be aware of their existence. In those dark days it was the clergy and the more wealthy among the laity who were directly assailed. In those days it was easy enough to see, or rather, it was impossible not to see, that the enemies of the

Church were waging war against her. In those days every boy in an English Catholic school or college abroad knew very well that if he became a priest, and returned to England, he would be liable to be hunted down by the pursuivants, and hanged and quartered after the mockery of a trial for treason, as happened to so many; or else to be kept for years in a comfortless and filthy prison, as happened to a much larger number. And he knew, too, that as a Catholic layman of property and position, he would expose himself to the severest penalties if he were to harbour a priest; and to vexatious fines and other annoyances if he refused to take part in Protestant worship. In those days it was all but impossible not to take sides in an open conflict. Persecution has always acted as a winnowing-fan, separating the chaff from the good grain. While it frightened the faint-hearted into compliance, it stimulated the generous and the courageous to heroism.

In our own time, on the other hand, the attack is made, not primarily upon ourselves, but upon those who are least capable of understanding the injury which is being done them—that is to say, on the poor, and on the children of the poor. It is against our schools, and in particular against our elementary schools, that the enemy is now directing his assaults, and this with a prospect of success that may well fill us, and ought to fill us, with alarm. It is not that the opponents of denominational schools (as they are called) are, all of them or even most of them, declared enemies of religion. It would be very unjust to say that. But many of

them are of the sort who would relegate religion to a quite secondary and subordinate place in human life, so that it shall on no account be allowed to stand in the way of temporal interests, or what are deemed to be such. They are men who regard the establishment of one uniform system of secular education throughout the country as of more importance than the teaching of religion. And, since Catholic schools and Anglican schools as such stand in the way of that perfect uniformity which to them seems so pre-eminently desirable, they are naturally determined to make matters as difficult as possible for the supporters of such schools.

Now it is plain that an attack on the religious interests of our poorer brethren does not compel our attention as would an open persecution directed against ourselves, or against the class to which we happen to belong. If the Catholic elementary schools of England, Wales, and Scotland were to be swept away to-morrow, this would not—directly at least—affect the worldly prospects of those who live in easy circumstances. But it would be nothing less than a fatal blow to the progress of the faith in this country for many generations to come. For it is in the school rather than in the home that the children of our poor learn the truths, and the principles, and the practice of their religion. And, if our schools were to be swept away, the leakage (as it is called) from the Catholic Church would quickly become a hundredfold greater than it already most unfortunately is.

It is a fortunate circumstance, for which we cannot

be too deeply thankful, that those who are most deeply engaged in these efforts represent, as yet, only a minority in this country.* It is fortunate that, even outside the visible unity of the Catholic Church, there is a very large body of the population which still retains enough of Catholic principles to enable them to see clearly that religion must hold the first and most important place in all education; and that religion worthy of the name must needs be definitely dogmatic, or it will quickly become no better than a vague system of moral precepts supported by no effective sanction. For all this we may be thankful, as his late Holiness, Pope Leo XIII., in his letter to the English people, taught us to be.

Nevertheless there is reason to fear that the secularist party is gaining strength; and it would, alas, be no new thing if the enemies of the Cross of Christ were to prove themselves more alert, more vigilant, more energetic, than the friends and followers of our Lord. It would be no new thing if, in this present century as in past ages, "the children of this world" were to show themselves "wiser in their generation than the children of light." We have, then, every reason to be on our guard, and to look to our fortifications and munitions of war, lest we should be taken unprepared.

Now, humanly speaking, and apart from the strictly supernatural weapon of prayer, our only reliable safeguard against the attacks of the enemy is to have all our places of education in the best possible

* This discourse, it will be remembered, was delivered six months before the last General Election.

condition structurally and financially. We hear in these days a great deal about the "Nonconformist conscience"; and to the conscience of any man—provided that the word "conscience" be rightly understood—no one, it is to be hoped, would wish to do violence. But the word conscience is sometimes wofully misused, and made to do duty as a party cry for merely political purposes. And it may be affirmed, without any injustice or breach of charity, that many of those who are loudest in their protests under this plea have a spot which is at least as tender as their political conscience, and that is—their pocket. When we can point to a vast array of schools of all grades, built and equipped at our own expense, in a financially sound position, and in all respects satisfying the requirements of the educational authorities of the day, our enemies will think twice before throwing on the shoulders of already overburdened ratepayers the enormous expense of making good these various establishments. And this would, of course, have to be done if ever the day should come when denominational education no longer received public recognition, and ceased to receive the support, on equal terms so far as maintenance is concerned, of public money in requital of a public service.

Unfortunately, at present, the number of our schools of various kinds by no means fully answers to our needs; and a good many of our existing schools, of all grades, are very far from being in an entirely satisfactory condition. Some of them suffer from structural defects, and will need either to be

entirely rebuilt or altered and enlarged at great expense. Others, which in all material respects are beyond reproach, are yet labouring under the burden of debt. Are these things a reason for discouragement? Far from it. The catastrophe which threatens us may be averted, and, please God, will be averted, if only the Catholic laity of England will resolutely set themselves to the work, and will show themselves ready, even at the cost of sacrifices hitherto unparalleled, to save for the children of our poor the faith of our fathers and of theirs, by doing all that is requisite to meet the growing demands—exorbitant though they may sometimes be—of the educational authorities. For it is to little purpose to allege that the demands are unreasonable, as, in particular instances at least, they almost certainly have been and are. The demands are made by those who have the power to enforce them, even as, in days gone by, the civil government had the power to enforce the penal laws. And just as, then, there was no alternative between facing the penalties inflicted by those laws and allowing the faith to die out of the country, so now there is no alternative between meeting the demands of the educational authorities and losing our elementary schools, some of them at first, and ultimately—it is to be feared—the whole of them.

And these requirements, as has been said, can be met by the Catholic laity of England only at the cost of sacrifices hitherto unparalleled in recent times. For, as the demand is enormously greater than it has hitherto been, so also must the supply to meet the demand be enormously greater. And it can be

met only by a determined cutting down of that wasteful and extravagant expenditure on pleasure and amusements of which there is so much, even among the Catholic laity (as Catholic laymen will themselves tell you) at the present day. There will be need of much plain living; of a healthy and manly simplicity and frugality; in a word there will be need of much self-denial on a large and generous scale. In the words of one who has spent half a lifetime in the service of destitute Catholic children: "The penurious distribution of peddling alms is as effective," for the purpose now under consideration, "as it would be to plaster up the fissures of Vesuvius. The remedy must be as large and deep and generous as the danger is multifold, far-reaching, and menacing." And, be it added, the chief gainers by such a *régime* of self-denial as these words imply will be—not those for whose sake and on whose behalf it is undergone, but—those who, fired with the true spirit of Christian charity, voluntarily submit themselves to it.

Hitherto I have spoken, and have purposely done so, on the general subject of the educational outlook as it concerns Catholics in England, rather than of the needs of this particular school at Fulwood for which it is my duty and my privilege to plead this afternoon. And the reason why it seemed best to deal with the subject in its wider aspect is this. I cannot but think that our enthusiasm and our generosity are apt to be more efficaciously aroused, when we understand that the particular purpose for which we are invited to contribute is only one item in a gigantic work on which the Catholics of the

whole country are, or should be, engaged. On the other hand it must be admitted that there is room for much difference of opinion on the magnitude and the gravity of the educational peril at large, and as to the best means of meeting it. But there can be no difference of opinion among Catholics as to the splendid work done by the devoted Sisters who have undertaken the charge of this school, and as to the importance of relieving them of the burden of debt—a debt quite unavoidably incurred—which weighs upon them. Let not your gifts this afternoon be determined by the dictates of merely conventional propriety; by the consideration of what others are likely to give, or of what you have yourselves been accustomed to give on similar occasions in the past. As long as this school is in debt, something of a reproach lies at our doors. When we have wiped out this debt, there will still remain no lack of claims upon our charity; no lack of opportunities of heaping up treasure in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, and where thieves break not in nor steal. Our modern banks may be burglar-proof, but only the bank of heaven is proof against the depredations of the great thief, death. When he has done his work you will find that whatever you have spent on mere self-indulgence is gone forever and beyond recall; but that your contributions for the saving of Christ's little ones are all booked to your credit, and will bear interest for all eternity. The security is good and the rate of interest high. Christ from His crib pleads with you; He pleads with you from His Cross? Need I say more?

XXXIV.

THREE IDEALS OF LIFE*

"Defraud not thyself of the good day, and let no particle of a good gift escape thee."—ECCLUS. xiv. 14.

AS the end of our school year draws near for all of us, and for many of us the end of our school course, it may be useful to review and revise our ideals of life. What is it that we are setting ourselves to do? What is the sort of result that we hope to achieve? Or have we, perhaps, no settled purpose at all, no real *intention* in life; but only the habit of half-consciously following at all times what is called in physical science "the line of least resistance"? In this latter case it would have to be said of us that we have not quite outgrown our childhood; for it is characteristic of a mere child to be swayed this way and that by the changing whims of successive hours and moments.

But these words are addressed to those who are old enough and have sense enough to see that it is high time to formulate for themselves, if they have not already done so, some kind of philosophy of life, some consistent principles of action in accordance

July 23, 1905 (sixth Sunday after Pentecost).

with which they propose to shape their conduct, either during the years of school-boyhood that yet remain to them, or during their longer and wider future.

Are we going to take our place among the class of men or boys who may be described as "Good-timers" or "Pass-timers"—people whose notion of life is to get through it as agreeably as they can; to extract as much pleasure out of it as possible; so that it presents to them a perspective of "good times," with what boys sometimes call "feeds" for their central points, separated only by inevitable (though regrettable) intervals of work, or dulness, or digestion?

This view of life is plainly unworthy of a man, and still more of a Christian. It is (to borrow a comparison from a previous consideration) as though a nobleman should indulge in the tastes and affect the dress and occupation of a groom. *Noblesse oblige.* We have been created for something better than mere pleasure. The animal in us is not our highest and best part. Even the æsthetic pleasures of the perceptive senses, the pleasures of music, travel, sight-seeing, and the rest, or the more active excitements of sport in its various forms, all these are empty and vapid when a man makes them (contrary to the intention of our Creator) his chief end or occupation in life. And if this consideration of the purpose of our creation is not strong enough to influence and steady us, then we do well to bear in mind the extreme danger of the "good-time" ideal. If we live for pleasure, sinless pleasure will soon pall and become insipid. The prodigal in the parable

wanted a "good time." But travel and sight-seeing did not long satisfy him, and he must needs "devour his substance . . . living riotously."* Eating and drinking are, in due order and measure, necessary and lawful. But to give to eating and drinking a foremost place in our thoughts would be dangerous as well as foolish and vulgar. There is no safety in the crude maxim: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."† And only one degree less unworthy and less perilous is the maxim of the calculating votary of pleasure: "Let us eat and drink daintily and in moderation, and then perhaps we may live till the day after to-morrow." And what is true of eating and drinking is true in its degree of every kind of pleasure and of comfort. To make these things our ideal is unworthy of us as men and as Christians; *and it is not safe.* We are making our life's pilgrimage through an enemy's country, and in such a region we cannot afford to be off our guard.

So much then (and enough and to spare) for the "good-timer" and the "pass-timer." Next comes the gentleman who may be described as the "half-timer." He is really a very decent fellow as things go; and, in a certain limited sense, he might be described as a credit to his school. He is tolerably regular in the practice of his religious duties; which, however, he is careful to perform with the strictest moderation. He never (or hardly ever) omits his morning or night prayers; but he runs no risk of unduly protracting them. He is particular about his

* St Luke xv. 13. † 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Sunday Mass and his Friday abstinence; but he avoids hearing Mass on week-days, lest he should become too pious. He receives Holy Communion at decent intervals; probably once a month, when it is not too inconvenient. There is every hope that he will save his soul; and his obituary notice in the *Magazine* will be decently laudatory, without being uncomfortably so by reason of any high standard of example which he has set.

Then, it may be asked: "What more do you want? And why should he be dubbed a 'half-timer'?" The explanation is simple enough. All the items which have been placed to the credit of this estimable person are in themselves good; nay, even admirable as far as they go. But, if they go no further, they do not lift him out of the rut or groove of respectable mediocrity. All these things are consistent with a good deal of selfishness in a man's religion. And his religion may still be a portion of his life standing well apart from the rest of it. He is pious—respectably pious—on Sundays. He is devout—respectably devout—for five minutes every morning, and for perhaps a quarter of an hour in the evening. His contributions to charitable objects and purposes are —respectable. His language is respectable, and his conduct is respectable; but beyond respectability you can't get much out of him. And respectability is essentially a sort of middling virtue. The element of sacrifice, of earnestness, of enthusiasm, of anything that deserves to be called zeal, is wanting; as his parish priest is well aware. His goodness is rather of the negative type. He has no idea of making the

very best of his opportunities, or of putting himself out about anything. Apart from the few minutes spent in prayer, he considers that his time is his own, to be used as may best please him, short of sin; and he would resent the idea that anything more should be expected of him than the excellent example which he is already setting;—an example of respectability, of respectability as unimpeachable as that of a house in Bedford Square, Bloomsbury. He is a half-timer; and those who are solicitous for his welfare may be thankful for that; but, he is not what he might have been; and one day, when he wakes up in the next world, he will be aghast at his own shortsightedness and dulness of comprehension, which has made him the poorer for all eternity. Oh why did not someone put a higher ideal before him when he was young? In the days of his youth all sorts of generous instincts were latent in his nature, waiting to be awakened by some stimulating influence, but, alas, it was wanting; while many causes powerfully contributed to keep him down to the low level above which he has not risen.

And then, thirdly, there is what we may call the "full-timer," and he is the really and entirely desirable kind of man; the sort of man whom we should like to see produced in large numbers by our Catholic schools and colleges. He is a layman, but his ruling principle in life is that of giving to God the first place; the first place everywhere and at all times. He has been taught, and by earnest meditation he has made the truth his own, that the whole of a man's life, and every least part of it, should be

devoted, one way or other, to the service of God. His religion is not an affair of Sundays only, or confined to set times of prayer. He has got a good grip of the truth that all the world is God's workshop, and that in His service there is no overtime. It would sound like an exaggeration to say that the hours of work are twenty-four in the day; but it is —as he is well aware—no exaggeration to say that every moment of the twenty-four hours ought to be spent either in work or in fitting ourselves for work; either in using our tools or in sharpening them. He knows very well, and has familiarised himself with the thought, that rest, food, and amusement are lawful and reasonable precisely in so far as they help to fit us for the work which God wishes us to do, and no further; that their true function is to serve as oil for the wheels of life; and that a superfluity of them is as much out of place as a superfluity of malodorous oil slobbered over the works of a motor. The use of the oil is to ease the works, not to clog and hamper them. He has laid to heart those words of St Paul, which we have more than once considered together: "All things, whatsoever ye do, whether in word or in work, all do ye in the name of the Lord."* And he knows very well that we cannot say foolish things or do foolish things "in the name of the Lord"; that we cannot waste our time "in the name of the Lord"; or waste our money "in the name of the Lord"; or deliberately fritter away our energies on any kind of useless and unprofitable pursuit "in the name of the Lord."

* Col. iii. 17.

And so his constant effort is to bring his life and conduct more and more thoroughly under the dominion of reason enlightened by faith; to turn his faculties, his time, his means, his opportunities, all to the very best account for God's service; to sanctify the duties of each day by a good intention; and to go as far beyond the limits of strict duty in all manner of well-doing as his personal qualities and outward circumstances will allow. His crucifix—that standing memorial of God's love for men—is a reality for him; and he draws his strength from earnest prayer, and holy Mass, and the Sacraments. His guiding principle in life is the great law of generosity. The question ever before his mind is not: "How little am I bound to do, consistently with saving my soul?" but rather: "Is there anything more that I can do for that Divine Master who became Man to minister to my needs, and who never spared or stinted anything whatsoever that He could either do or suffer in my service?" In particular he will ask himself: "Is there anything more that I can do, in alms or in work, for the little ones of Christ, for the poor and the afflicted?"

Such is the man who, in the language of Holy Scripture, lives "full days"—days filled to overflowing with merit in God's sight; the man who, *consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa* *—who, being quickly made perfect, compresses into a few years the work of a lifetime. His career may be undistinguished, his actions inconspicuous, in the eyes of the world, for circumstances beyond his control may restrict his

* Wisd. iv. 13.

activities within a narrow sphere. But in God's eyes he will have done great things; and by his example and his influence even within that narrow sphere he will all unconsciously have sown a seed, the fruitage of which will astonish even his best and most intimate friends in the day of the great awakening.

Here, then, are three ideals of life; the first entirely unworthy of us; the second respectable but no more; the third, in all points admirable. Which is to be ours? That is a question which must be answered by each one for himself, not in words but in will and in action.

XXXV.

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

"Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom, and is rich in prudence. . . . Her ways are fair ways, and all her paths are peaceful. . . . My son, let not these things depart from thy eyes; keep the law and the counsel. . . . Then shalt thou walk confidently in thy way, and thy foot shall not stumble. . . . For the Lord will be at thy side, and will keep thy foot that thou be not taken."—PROV. iii. 13, 17, 21, 23, 26.

"Be not delighted in the paths of the wicked, neither let the way of evil men please thee. . . . [For] the way of the wicked is darksome; they know not where they fall. . . . But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forth and increaseth even to the perfect day."—PROV. iv. 14, 18, 19.

ONCE more, at the close of a school year, we stand at what is, for many of you, the parting of the ways. Within a few weeks from now, many of you will not only have bid good-bye to the school in which you have spent the greater part of some five or six or seven years, but will have made your start in life. And the question which is of supreme interest to us who have been responsible collectively or individually for your Christian training, is, of course, what will be the nature or character of your future career. Not primarily, what your profession or occupation, or the

* July 30, 1905 (seventh Sunday after Pentecost).

external circumstances of your life, are to be; nor even what degree of external and visible success you will achieve; for, after all, in the sight of God these things are indifferent. He looks, not to the uniform which a man wears, or the particular nature of the business in which he is engaged, but to the disposition of the heart, the state of the soul, the rectitude and strength of the intention and the will; He measures us not by our success but by our efforts, and by the motives which inspire and direct those efforts. And we, too, as far as is permitted to the limitations of the human understanding, would wish to look at all these things from God's point of view.

Once more, then, we stand at the parting of the ways. On the one hand our Lord beckons us, and most lovingly invites us—not priests alone but all Christians, and you among the number—to follow Him along the steep and rugged path of self-denial: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* There is no escaping the truth of these uncompromising words. We may shut our eyes to them as they confront us on the printed page. We may close the book and put it aside as an unwelcome monitor. We may do our best to forget the lesson which has again and again fallen upon our ears, and to which we could not deafen our bodily organs of hearing. But do what we will, the truth will find us out at last, and by the truth that we knew we shall be judged. "The sign of the Son of Man," which sign is no other than that of the cross, the instrument of His victory and the

* St Matt. xvi. 24.

trophy of His triumph,—the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens, when He shall come to judge the world ; * and under that judgment we must all pass. There will be no exemption from that final examination, the results of which will determine, without appeal, whether we have gained, or lost, the certificate of eternal salvation, and if we have gained it, whether we have passed with distinction or otherwise.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Such is our Lord's invitation. And what does it really and practically mean, for us? It does not mean, for most of us, the giving up of our temporal prospects, the renunciation of the joys of conjugal love proper to the state of holy matrimony, or submission to the yoke of religious obedience. These things are for the few. *Qui potest capere, capiat.* † They are not within the reach of the majority of mankind. But we are all called to at least such a degree and measure of self-denial as is needed for resistance to temptation, for the faithful observance of God's commandments and those of His Church, and for unremitting attention to our work, whatever that work may be, till the day comes, as it will come for all of us, when a man can work no more. And further than this, we are all invited to such a degree of self-denial as is involved in the carrying out of a resolute determination to turn our time, our means, and our opportunities (even outside and beyond the limits of strict duty) to the very best account for the service of

* St Matt. xxiv. 30. † St Matt. xix. 12.

God and of His Church, and of our fellowmen for God's sake.

On the other side, the devil and the world invite us to make self-indulgence our aim and end in life; to do no more work than we are compelled to do by the circumstances of our position; and to devote all our spare time, and means, and energies to the pursuit of pleasure, of comfort, of wealth, or of honour. And with the devil and the world our own corrupt inclinations are in the closest alliance, a triple alliance, more enduring and indissoluble than any that has ever been known to diplomacy, whether Western or Eastern.

Which of these two invitations shall we heed and follow? Which of these two paths shall we choose? Shall we hearken to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ and the invitation of His Blessed Mother, who have ever been and will ever be our truest and best Friends? Or shall we choose, rather, to listen to the voice of the tempter, whom we know to be our worst enemy, only dangling his baubles before us that he may get us into his clutches? He will tell us that the counsels we have heard at school are old-fashioned and out of date. He will tell us that it is foolish to attend to the words of one who, as a priest shut up in a college, may be assumed to know nothing of the world and of the realities of life. But our conscience, on the other hand, will tell us that what we have heard is precisely as old-fashioned as the Gospel, which can never be out of date. Which shall we choose? Much, perhaps all, will depend on our first steps; for God, who promises pardon

to the truly penitent, has not promised to override our own free will and to force upon us the grace of repentance.

Some of us, perhaps, will say: "I will only go a short way along the broad road; I will not follow it so far as to offend God grievously; I will stop short at that point." Do not flatter yourself. Do not deceive yourself. It is not so easy as you may perhaps imagine to stop short on a slippery downward incline. Or again, you may say: "There must be some *via media* (to use a phrase of Newman's Anglican days), some intermediate path, less dangerous than that of unlimited self-indulgence; less arduous than that of uncompromising self-denial. I will seek out and choose this middle path." This it is extremely probable that some of you will do. You will be—in the fashion which I described last Sunday—"half-timers"; neither out-and-out sinners nor thoroughly earnest Christians, but something "betwixt and between"; missing the happiness in this life which only the generous service of God can win for you, and missing a great portion of that everlasting reward that was within your reach. And you will learn your folly when it is too late to amend it.

But most of us, please God, when we feel the first beginnings of independent responsibility in external matters cast upon us; when we begin to learn how selfish and heartless that world is which our imagination had painted in such alluring colours; when we look back upon our school days and begin to understand that what we were then taught was, after all,

only plain common-sense,—most of us, I say, will, please God, resolutely gird ourselves to serve Him generously to the utmost of our abilities and opportunities. And yet even for such men, and they are the right sort, an initial resolution is not enough. It is true that the considerations which have been put before you are the merest common-sense, the very A B C of the spiritual life. It is true that they are all implied—as we were reminded not long since—in the motto *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*, which we have been accustomed so constantly to use. But human passions are strong; and the fashions of the day—the worldly and frivolous and un-Christian fashions of the day—exercise a powerful influence which tends to draw us into many kinds of foolishness. And in order to resist the incitements of passion and the allurements of the world, we need something more than mere dry reason and common-sense.

And this something more is provided for us in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man for us and crucified for us. It was the love of Christ crucified which strengthened the saints and bore them upwards to the heights of heroism which they attained. And it is the same love of Christ crucified which will be our best safeguard, and will keep us from being carried away by the gusts of temptation or by the flood-tide of that worldliness which, if we allow ourselves to yield to it, will infallibly expose us to many temptations. And the best means by which we can foster in ourselves this personal love of our Lord are the means which He has

appointed,—prayer, and the Sacraments, and the service of His poor.

Prayer, not the mere hurried and unreflecting recital of "words out of a book," but mental prayer, the prayer which is seasoned with thought, and which stirs the heart, this kind of prayer will both deepen our convictions and kindle our enthusiasm. And no prayers will so deepen our convictions and kindle our enthusiasm as those which we make in preparation and in thanksgiving for Holy Communion. It is the very Sacrament of love; the pledge of our Lord's love for us; the appointed stimulus of our love towards Him. But if we would advance in this love we must foster it as well as prove its sincerity by active exercise. "If you love Me, keep My commandments;" * this is the lowest and indispensable degree of love. "If you love Me, feed My lambs;" † this is the higher counsel which an enlightened view of our own best interests, together with those generous instincts which lie deep in our nature, both enforced by the grace of God working in our souls, will alike prompt us to follow at whatever temporary cost to ourselves. He who said: "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross," said also: "Come to Me all ye that labour and are sorely burdened, and I will refresh you." ‡ It is those who have the courage and generosity to follow the first invitation who are entitled to the consolations promised in the second.

* St John xiv. 15.
† So, in effect, St John xxi. 15-18.
‡ St Matt. xi. 20.

APPENDIX

XXXVI.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF YOUTH*

"It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God. It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."—LAM. iii. 26-27.

INSTEAD of attempting to-day anything in the nature of a formal panegyric of St Ignatius of Loyola, whose Feast we are celebrating, I propose to put before you some simple thoughts about two subjects—perhaps I ought rather to say two objects—which that great saint had very much at heart, and towards the promotion of which he devoted some of his best energies. They are two things which, at first sight, might seem to have nothing in common, but between which it is possible, I think, to find some bond of connection. They are (1) the Spiritual Exercises, with their natural complement, the habitual practice of mental prayer, and (2) the Christian Education of Youth. And the link of connection between them is the fundamental idea of the ordering of man's life towards its true end, which is God, and in accordance with its true purpose, which is the service of God.

It is impossible to read, to study—to use as it was meant to be used—that book of the Spiritual Exercises which has so many claims to be regarded as the chief

* Preached in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, on the Feast of St Ignatius of Loyola, July 31, 1902.

legacy of St Ignatius to the Christian world,—it is impossible, I say, to read, to study, to use this book, without perceiving that its author was deeply impressed with the *disorder* of human life as he saw it around him, and as he had experienced it in himself before his conversion. Not individuals alone, but to a great extent society at large, had, as it seemed to him, gone astray from its appointed end, and was pursuing deceptive aims. It was not merely that error was rife and heresy rampant; but even among those who had kept the faith, nay, even within the sacred precincts of the sanctuary and the cloister, there were grave scandals; worldly ideals were only too prevalent; and that an ecclesiastic should engage in an eager quest for wealth, and luxury, and honours, was a phenomenon so ordinary as to seem almost a matter of course. The courtly prelate, the worldly churchman, the grasping pluralist, the ambitious cleric intriguing for place and power,—these are types which in our days have happily become extinct, and it may be that we owe this purification of the Church in some measure to the silent work of Ignatius of Loyola. At any rate, these types were common enough in his day, so much so, indeed, as to almost set the fashion; and, in the face of the gravest dangers to the Church from the inroads of heresy, the men who should have been her chief defenders were too often tarnished with those very vices which had given to the so-called Reformers some colour of an excuse for their revolt against Catholic unity. I do not think I have drawn too black a picture; it was painted in yet darker tints by holy men who were contemporaries of the saint. And if there was much that was lamentable in the case of many of the clergy and of many religious, this was, of course, still more the case with the Christian laity.

Thank God, dear brethren, these things are no longer so. And yet the tendency and the temptation to worldliness, under ever-changing forms, are with us still; and the specific remedy devised by St Ignatius for this disorder of life is not yet out of date. What is this specific remedy, which was, indeed, not so much devised by him, as gently forced upon his knowledge and experience by the merciful providence of God? The change, as he very plainly perceived, must come from within, rather than from outside. So far as human co-operation was required for the carrying out of a divine work, the cure must be wrought rather by the personal efforts of the sick man himself than by the prescriptions of any spiritual physician. And therefore he made it a chief object of his zeal not merely to preach—and procure that others should preach—to the multitudes, but to induce—and procure that others should induce—individuals, or groups of individuals—and more particularly men of position and influence, of education and intelligence—to retire for a while into solitude, and there, with the accompaniment of prayer and penance, to meditate seriously on their relations to God our Creator and Redeemer and on the mysteries of our Lord's life and Passion; on the end for which man was created; on the obstacles which hinder him and the deceits which turn him aside from reaching that end; and on the motives and the means by which he may help himself to attain it in the highest degree of which he may be capable.

No one, of course, pretends that St Ignatius invented mental prayer, or the practice of spiritual retreats, any more than Aristotle or Aldrich invented logic. But it would be absurd to deny that he conferred a signal service on the Church by systematising mental prayer, by tracing out a definite course of "Spiritual Exercises,"

and by promoting these holy practices by every means in his power.

There are those who say that the Ignatian method of meditation, as laid down in the book of the Exercises, is artificial, and that it stands in the way of the higher flights of the soul into the regions of purely affective prayer. Now the Ignatian method of meditation is artificial in the sense that it does not come natural to us; that a certain degree of mental training is needed to enable us to *think straight* on any subject whatever, and more especially on subjects concerning which straight thinking is apt to lead to conclusions which are displeasing to our self-love. But St Ignatius certainly never intended his method to stand in the way of higher flights in the case of those who were really capable of better things. But he knew the danger of self-delusion in the matter of affective prayer, and he thought that, at least for beginners, and especially for those beginners who might be tempted to think themselves advanced, a kind of mental prayer which constantly and systematically brings the affections to the test of reflection and self-examination, would be found to be a most salutary exercise.

In this sense, then, and with these reservations, it may be truly said that St Ignatius taught men to meditate, that is to say, to ponder seriously and perseveringly, logically and systematically, those truths of faith which are most worthy to occupy the mind of man, and to draw their own practical conclusions for the ordering of their lives towards God. In these days we hear a good deal about "individualism" as opposed to "collectivism." In the best sense of the term, St Ignatius was the most uncompromising upholder of individualism in the spiritual life. "Not too many words" is, in substance, his warning to fathers who give the Spiritual

Exercises; "just enough to put a man on the right track, and then leave him to himself and to God." What he wished to do was to introduce the individual soul, as it were, into the divine presence, and then to await results. "Let the Creator deal with His creature," he says more than once; for he believed, with the prophet, that "it is a good thing to wait with silence for the salvation of God."

But men cannot be always in retreat, and he would have the exercitant take with him, as one of the most precious fruits of the Spiritual Exercises, the habit of beginning every day by spending some time in earnest mental prayer, so that the work of each day may be ordered in accordance with the same principles by which he has already determined to order his life as a whole.

And it was this same sense of the importance of the right *ordering* of life that made St Ignatius so solicitous about the Christain training of youth. Childhood and youth are the morning of life. And a sound Christian education—by which I do not mean the mere acquisition of what is called religious knowledge, still less the learning by rote certain forms of words out of a catechism, but the religious training of the mind and heart,—Christian education in this sense may be called, in a manner, the morning meditation of life. As the whole day is, or should be, coloured, or, as St Ignatius would prefer to say, *set in order*, by our morning's mental prayer, so the long day of a man's life may be and should be set in order by the principles which he—in part unconsciously—assimilates in childhood and in youth. Of the information which he receives at school much will be forgotten, and some may prove comparatively useless in after life, but his religious principles should abide with him from the home of his childhood and the schoolroom of his boyhood, even to his grave.

Now, in order to have education, it is plain that you must have an educator. And St Ignatius wished the members of the Society of Jesus, especially in the earlier —though not quite the earliest—years of their religious life, to be competent and trustworthy educators of youth, of course under the guidance of superiors of mature age; and he planned and devised at least the rough draft of a system of education which, after his death, was further elaborated, and has since been modified in various particulars so as to suit the various and changing needs of different countries and times. For the present, however, I am concerned rather with the man than with the system, for on the man the efficiency of the system must principally depend. Of what sort, then, is this comparatively youthful educator of youth—the Jesuit scholastic in the best and freshest years of his early manhood—to whom Catholic parents are invited, if it so please them, to confide in great measure the training of their boys?

Let me sketch him as I think he would be according to the mind of St Ignatius, and as I believe him to be in actual fact. It would be absurd to pretend that he is, on the average, a man of exceptionally brilliant talents, a hero, or a saint. But he is a man who, having a very modest estimate of his own powers, is quietly and resolutely determined that they shall be devoted entirely and without stint to the service of his Divine Master, and to the service of his boys for the sake of their Lord and his. He is a man who lives habitually in the presence of God; a man who makes the law of generosity, not the law of parsimony, towards God, the rule of his life; a man whose habitual question is not: "How little am I bound to do?" but: "Is there anything more that I can do for God and my boys?" Comfort, amusement, self-indulgence of all kinds, he has learned to

despise; or rather, he hardly thinks of them, except in so far as some measure of relaxation is needful to keep him in condition for the efficient discharge of his duties. And here again, his question is not: "How much of these things can I manage to secure from the indulgence of my superiors?" but rather: "How far can I contrive to do without them?" Externally calm and quiet, it is possible that at first sight you might think him a little lacking in enthusiasm; but, in truth, he has so trained himself to work up to the very limit of his power, that he wastes no energy in useless excitement. And if you could penetrate the secrets of his morning prayer, and of his habitual recollection, you would find that there is, indeed, a hidden fire of enthusiasm under that calm and modest exterior. For in his novitiate, and in his yearly retreats and his daily meditations, he has kindled and kept alive, deep down in his heart, this threefold conviction: (1) that there is one *Man*, and only one, Who is worthy of all our heart's loyalty, and that Man is Christ Jesus our Lord; (2) that there is one *work*, and only one, that is worthy of a man's entire self-devotion, and that is the work which He came on earth to do, the great work of the salvation of souls; and (3) that there is one *way*, and only one, in which that work can be carried out in its highest perfection, and that is the way which He chose, the way of self-denial, suffering, humiliation,—the way of the Cross. Now our young Jesuit scholastic knows very well, of course, that the heavier crosses, great sufferings, grievous humiliations, severe mortifications, are the choice prizes of life, such as fall only to the few. He hardly expects them for himself, at least in the present stage of his life. But if he cannot have humiliations, he can rejoice in obscurity, and in the sweet peace of the hidden life; and you could not do him a greater disservice than to make a fuss about

him, or pay him empty compliments. If it is not given to him to endure severe sufferings, at least he will thankfully bear the cross of daily drudgery, of a somewhat monotonous and very wearing existence, in which to something more than the toils of the paid schoolmaster are added the exercises of the religious life; and he wishes for nothing better than to go on working for God in some equally obscure employment, unknown to the world at large, and unnoticed by his neighbours, until the night come when a man can work no more. He knows that "it is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God." He knows that "it is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."

You may say, perhaps, that all this is only what is common to all religious, and is not uncommonly found in the daily lives of our devoted clergy. Please God this is indeed so, and thank God that this should be so. It is no part of my purpose to draw invidious comparisons; but confining myself to what falls within the limits of my own experience, I would say that this is the standard of life which has been kept continually before my eyes by those younger members of the Society of Jesus with whom it has been my privilege to live for much more than half my life.

Now St Ignatius seems to have thought that daily and hourly contact with men of this stamp would be good for boys. He seems to have thought that in course of time they would assimilate some of that spirit of deep piety, of conscientious devotion to duty, of generous readiness to go far beyond the limits of mere duty, of that practice of self-denial and self-control, which they could not help seeing exemplified in their masters, if those masters were such men as he intended them to be. And as regards qualifications for teaching in the various secular branches

of learning, he thought he might safely leave it to the discretion and responsibility of superiors to see that their men were competent in the matters which they were appointed to impart to others. Was he justified in this hope? Justified, I mean, on the whole and in general; for in the Society, as in every other human organisation, there must, of course, be occasional failures.

It is not without reason that I ask this question, or, rather, propose it for your consideration. There are those who say that Jesuit education has had its day; that it is not suitable for the present time, or for this country. In a modern work of fiction by a Catholic author, which I happened to read not long since, I find these words, which are put into the mouth of the heroine of the story: "I am absolutely averse to the system of excessive supervision practised by those priests whom you will know best as Jesuits. The Order of Jesus is a magnificent one" (the heroine of a novel must be allowed a little exaggeration) "a magnificent one as a missionary and preaching order, but—for English boys at least—their system of training is a mistake. Nine times out of ten it takes all the backbone out of a boy, and he very seldom recovers it."

This is a rather sweeping indictment, made, no doubt, with the best of intentions as a friendly and timely warning to Catholic parents; but it is possibly one of those judgments which are so often, and often with such mischievous consequences, formed on the basis of first impressions, and of first impressions picked up at second or third hand. Certainly it would give great pain to St Ignatius, could he live amongst us again, if he thought that his sons had so far fallen away from the standard of life which he marked out for them, or had so failed to apply to local and national circumstances the principles which he laid down, that their system of training was a

mistake, at least in England, and that nine times out of ten it took all the backbone out of a boy.

Now I am not going to enter into an argument about the Jesuit system of training. I will only appeal to that common-sense principle which has the sanction of our Lord Himself: "By their fruits ye shall know them." There are now living in this country and in various parts of the British Empire, a considerable number of men, more or less distinguished, some of them very distinguished indeed, in the law, the army, and in other professions and pursuits, who have received their education in Jesuit schools. Will anyone venture to say that in uprightness, truthfulness, courage, modesty, in unwillingness to pronounce judgment on matters with which they do not happen to be acquainted, in a manly dislike of all uncharitableness and of words to the detriment of others, in a genuine and unaffected piety, in all those virtues and good qualities which make up the character of the typical Catholic Englishman, the former pupils of the Jesuits are behind their fellows who have been educated in other Catholic schools? And if it should, perchance, be objected that these men possess their good qualities not in consequence of their training in Jesuit colleges, but in spite of it, then I would answer simply: "Ask themselves."

And here I would very earnestly ask you not to misapprehend the purport of what I have said or suggested in vindication of Jesuit training as not unsuitable for English boys. Thank God, the Jesuits are not alone in the field. The Society of Jesus was not the first order to undertake the education of youth; and since the institution of the Society many other religious congregations have been established which are engaged in the same work; and, in England at least—for of England I am speaking—the diocesan clergy in

various parts of the country have set their hands to the same all-important task. Now, nothing could be further from the mind of St Ignatius than any kind of vanity or boastfulness, any preference of ourselves over others. I cannot speak from personal knowledge of other places of education besides our own ; but those who are conversant with their inner working would presumably be able to bear witness that the same qualities which I have enumerated, in my endeavour to describe the Jesuit scholastic, are to be found in the teachers who are at work in those Catholic colleges which are not managed by Jesuits, that their duties are carried out with the same self-denying zeal and with the same success, and that their personal influence is in no way inferior.

If I have spoken in defence of the Society's training, it is because I believe that, just as the campaign against the Jesuits in France has issued in a general war against all religious congregations, so also the particular objections that are raised against Jesuit colleges in this country will prove to be only the premises from which, as an inevitable conclusion, will be drawn, sooner or later, a general objection against all distinctively Catholic schools as such. Those who are so ready to discover that Jesuit training is injurious to the backbone will presently persuade themselves that the education given by some other order or congregation is bad for the liver or fatal to the digestion ; and—the wish being father to the thought—will find that it is their duty to send their sons to non-Catholic schools. This is not an idle fancy. There is a strong tendency at the present day to forego the advantages of a Catholic education for the sake of the social polish, or the social prestige, or the superior scholarship which is thought to be the result of education in an English public school.

And it is no matter for surprise to find, on the very next page of the book from which I just now quoted a condemnation of the Jesuit system, the following words: "It is a mistake that old-fashioned Catholics make, thinking that their boys will be harmed in Protestant colleges [the writer means public schools] . . . in these days." That is the conclusion to which the strictures on the Jesuits are only the premises, not, perhaps, logically adequate, but for practical purposes abundantly sufficient.

Now social polish and social prestige are not to be despised. To speak contemptuously of them would be what a recent writer has called an inexpensive form of not quite genuine asceticism. It is easy to belittle things of which one has but little personal knowledge, and this is a mistake which we should all do well to avoid. But it is important in these matters to be sure of our facts, and to view the facts in their true perspective. Is it quite certain that the boys who have been brought up in Catholic schools are lacking in social polish? It has been remarked of the boys in one at least of our English Catholic colleges, that in genuine politeness they are in no way inferior to the boys of a great public school not very remote from their gates; and I am inclined to think that perhaps this may be so. And if in one, then presumably also in the rest. At any rate, I have always been taught that the basis of true politeness should be laid in humility and charity, and in respect and consideration for all, from God's own poor upwards, or downwards. And it is possible that these foundations may be laid not less firmly and efficiently in a Catholic school than elsewhere. And then, as regards social prestige. Is it quite certain that a man is looked down upon by those whose judgment is worthy of consideration because he, or his parents on his behalf, have made a sacrifice for the sake of principle?

So again, with regard to scholarship and all that falls under the head of secular instruction. It is true that our Catholic schools and colleges often have to compete with their non-Catholic neighbours in the face of formidable odds, by reason of limited resources and inadequate equipment, as the writer whom I have quoted is good enough to point out. And here certainly a wide field lies open for the munificence of the wealthy. The fabled riches of the Jesuits may, perchance, have helped to make the fortune of more than one ingenious novelist. But you cannot build a new wing to your college, or furnish a laboratory with up-to-date scientific apparatus, out of merely fabled wealth ; and doubtless the same or greater difficulties lie in the path of those whom the popular imagination does not credit even with mythical treasures. And yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, do we invariably find that those who proceed from our Catholic schools and colleges to the Universities, or who present themselves for public examinations, are hopelessly out-distanced by their non-Catholic competitors? You know that it is not so. And the reason is not far to seek. A whole-souled self-devotion to work, that kind of devotion which reckons no hours as overtime that are spent in the service of God, this, brethren, can supply for many deficiencies, material and other.

But even if it be admitted, for the sake of argument, that in the matter of polish, and prestige, and scholarship, and scientific attainments, some advantage lies on the side of our wealthier non-Catholic rivals, can we be surprised that "old-fashioned Catholics" should remember the old-fashioned question : "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" * or that, bearing this question in mind, they should decline, for

* St Matt. xvi. 26.

the sake of some problematical polish, some possible prestige, some uncertain advantage in the matter of secular knowledge, to expose the faith and virtue of their sons to dangers to which it would be folly to shut our eyes? Can we be surprised if, on behalf of their children, they should remember those other words of our Lord: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you"?*

If St Ignatius were here in our midst to-day, and if some anxious father and mother were to consult him as to where they should send their sons to be educated, what do you suppose he would answer? One thing I am sure he would not do. He would not decide the question for them; and, more especially, he would not decide it in favour of a Jesuit school. It was his way to give people something to think about; not to do their thinking for them. He would point out the method by which they might arrive at a rational decision for themselves, the method of election which may be found in the book of the Spiritual Exercises.

I conceive that his answer would be something of this kind: "The question which you ask me is one which I will not undertake to decide. But I counsel you, in the first place, to gather all the reliable information you can about the various Catholic schools in the country,—reliable information, not mere gossip or the expression of opinions hastily formed. Secondly, I would urge you to go on your knees and meditate very seriously, and, if possible, to repeat your meditation for several days in succession, on the end and purpose of human existence, and on the responsibilties of a Christian parent. Thirdly, I would have you write down the reasons, *pro* and *contra*, in the case of each of those schools that may enter into your calculations. Fourthly, strike out all those reasons

* St Matt. vi. 33.

which have no bearing on the eternal welfare of your sons. (I do not say all reasons which have to do with temporal welfare, for these may have an important bearing on spiritual welfare in the long run.) Fifthly, ask the advice of some impartial person who has no personal interest in any of these establishments, and whose counsel will be guided only by the highest considerations. And, lastly, after renewed prayer for light and strength, make your election, and take care that it is your own. But, as you value the peace of your conscience, as you value the eternal welfare of your son, do not put the fashion of the hour before the claims of God and of His Church ; but send him to a school in which, whatever else he may learn, he will be taught to give God the first place, to cherish the Catholic faith and the Christian virtues as his most priceless possession ; in a word, do not allow yourselves to invent excuses for depriving him of that Catholic education for which your ancestors in dark days of persecution made so many sacrifices." And to those who have sons in our Catholic schools I think he would add this counsel here and now at this commencement of the holiday season : " Do not, during these coming weeks, by a foolish and fond indulgence, or by the example of worldliness in your own lives, undo the work that has been so laboriously done during the last twelve months or more." "It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."

PRINTED BY
OLIVER AND BOYD
EDINBURGH

9974